

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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# LIVES OF WYKEHAM, WAYNFLETE & MORE





H. Harwood.

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THE  
THREE CHANCELLORS

OR

*SKETCHES OF THE LIVES*

OF

WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM, WILLIAM OF WAYNFLETE,  
AND SIR THOMAS MORE

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN," ETC.

LONDON : BURNS & OATES, LIMITED.  
NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO : BENZIGER BROTHERS.



THE LIFE OF WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM



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BY

AUGUSTA THEODOSIA DRANE

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## PREFACE.

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THE following sketches do not aim at offering the reader complete biographies of the great men whose names they bear. They have been written merely with the view of introducing three of our English worthies of greatest note to a class of readers who may be supposed to be unacquainted with their history. The life of Sir Thomas More has, indeed, been treated by so many pens, both Catholic and Protestant, that any fresh biography might appear to have been unneeded. But his character is one so deservedly dear to English readers, that we are persuaded they will not be sorry to meet with an old friend in a new dress, even though they are already familiar with every incident which has been collected in the following pages.

The lives of the two great Prelates which occupy the first part of the volume are, however, less generally known; though the *names* of Wykeham and Waynflete, intimately united by the very similar objects to which they devoted themselves, carry with them a kind of traditionary respect. In a day when a peculiar value is attached to all questions connected with education, a sketch of these two great founders cannot be without its interest. But we must remind our readers that they are by no means selected as *unexampled* instances of piety, munificence, and zeal for learning. The Catholic Church once produced a crowd of such men in England; and the long list of her episcopal founders includes names not less illustrious than theirs: Merton, and Stapleton, and Rotherham, and Chicheley, and Fleming, and Fox, and Alcock,—all in their day laboured in the same good work; and their histories, were they written, would not be less suggestive of matter for our admiration than those of the founders of Winchester and Magdalen. Truly it may be said, that of her greatest men England knows little or nothing: we are for the most part content to think of them as belonging to a barbarous age, which was in-

different to the blessings of education; and even writers like Chandler, whilst recording the fact, that in the fifteenth century polite literature, philosophy, and divinity were pursued with vigour and enthusiasm, ask with contemptuous wonder what could be meant by "polite literature, philosophy, or divinity, in ages *before the Reformation?*"

We hope that in the following sketches we have shown that they meant much, and that education in the minds of these great men was understood in even a larger sense than it has been in later times. With them it was considered as the training of the entire being, as the perfect formation and development of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature of man. Their aim was to introduce a system which should elevate every part of that nature to its highest Christian ideal; and whilst all things were kept in harmony and proportion under the control and governance of the faith, Science and Piety went hand in hand, and Learning and Humility were made to embrace one another. The lives of these great Prelates are useful also as affording evidence of the manner in which the ecclesiastical revenues were expended by them, and, we may add, by hundreds like them. How constantly do we hear of the overgrown riches of the Church in the ages immediately preceding the Reformation! how little are we ever told of the objects on which those riches were lavished, and that, moreover, during the lifetime of their owners! Yet when we come to know the real extent of their munificence, we are forced to own, that in this point at least they have found no imitators in later centuries. Not without some purpose, however, have their memorials, as we fondly trust, been hitherto preserved among us. The stranger who wanders through the desecrated aisles of Winchester passes from the chantry of Wykeham to that of Fox, and a little further on finds himself standing between the tombs of Waynflete and Beaufort. Eloquent are the lessons which they preach to his heart; and as he gazes at the marvellous beauty of those rich and canopied chapels, the memories of Winton, and Corpus Christi, and Magdalen, and St. Cross rush upon his soul, filling him with great thoughts of charity to man, and boundless generosity to God.

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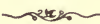
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# THE LIFE

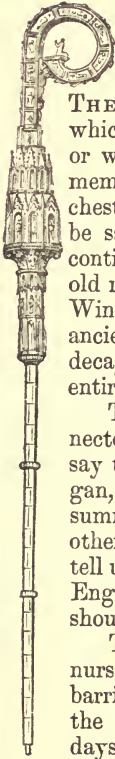
OF

## WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM.



### CHAPTER I.

#### THE SCHOOLBOY AND ARCHITECT.



THERE are probably few localities in England round which still lingers so much of Catholic association, or which—externally at least—preserve so many memorials of the ages of faith, as the city of Winchester. Of all our cathedral towns it may indeed be said, that they stand like so many monuments, continually suggestive of the power and spirit of our old religion; but of none is this more true than of Winchester, which still retains the wrecks of so many ancient institutions of piety, and where neither the decay of faith nor the lapse of time has been able entirely to efface the memory of their founders.

The history of the city, moreover, is closely connected with that of the kingdom; we might even say that it was there that our national existence began, in that great assembly of nobles and clergy summoned by Egbert after the submission of the other states of the Heptarchy, which, as some writers tell us, decreed that the whole island should be called England, and that thenceforth all its inhabitants should be known as Englishmen.

There, in the old monastery of Winchester, was nursed the great St. Swithin, in his own time the barrier of England against the Danes; there, too, the royal Confessor held his court; and from the days of Egbert to those of Richard Cœur de Lion, Winchester, rather than London, may be said to have been

the capital of the kingdom. Yet it is remarkable, that among all the great names associated with the city of Winchester, the special and peculiar interest attaches to one which is neither of royal nor of noble lineage; it is that of a man of obscure and humble parentage, not even a scholar, but one who owes his celebrity entirely to his moral worth and to his large-hearted benevolence. There must surely have been something very uncommon in the character of William of Wykeham, the subject of our present sketch, for his memory to have been preserved with veneration even to our own times, and among those most opposed to the faith which he professed; for he is one of the very few great Catholic prelates of England whose name has for the most part escaped the calumnies of posterity, and is honoured alike by Catholics and Protestants as among the best and worthiest that appear on the pages of our history.

He was born in the year 1324, towards the close of the reign of Edward II. His ancestors were of the old stock of English yeomen, a class just removed above that of mere peasants; and his parents were, as it would seem, too lowly to claim the privilege of a settled hereditary surname. This appears for many generations to have remained a distinction peculiar to the nobler born; and we therefore find the family of the future Chancellor of England called indifferently, sometimes by the name of Long, and sometimes by that of Perot, while he himself adopted that of the place of his birth,\* namely, the little village of Wykeham, which stands on the borders of Waltham Chase, about half way between Winchester and the sea. Little as is known of the parents of Wykeham, it is certain that they were too poor to provide him with the means of a liberal education; nor would they probably have aspired to any higher lot for their son than to till the lands of the Lords of Wykeham, as they had done before him, and to grow skilful in the science of woodcraft and the use of the English longbow

\* This was the almost invariable practice of ecclesiastics, who appear seldom to have retained their family name, but to have adopted that of their birthplace. Thus we have William of Waynflete, Simon of Sudbury, and many others.

in the glades of the royal forest. But a very different destiny awaited him; and the circumstance which first drew him out of obscurity illustrates one of the best features of a feudal state of society, which, with many hardships and exactions, brought also some blessings to the poorer classes. If the tie which bound together the lord and the peasant were one which in our day would be felt as holding the latter in bondage, there was this at least to recommend it, that it *was* a tie; there was a union of interests between the two classes, which often gave birth to kindly feelings and mutual good offices. That Sir Nicholas Uvedale, the lieutenant of Southampton and governor of Winchester Castle, who was nearly related to the lord of the manor of Wykeham, should have been on such free and friendly terms with the poor yeoman as not only to have remarked the quick and ready talent of his son, but also to have gone out of his way to help its cultivation, argues much in favour of the terms then existing between ranks of society now more widely separated. He resolved to give the boy an education, and at an early age sent him to a grammar-school, which occupied the site of the present College of Winchester, where his principal studies were, as we are told, French, geometry, logic, and arithmetic.

The only incident which is preserved of his school-life is one which lets us into a great secret of his character. From his earliest years Wykeham was remarkable for a special gift of devotion; and this is the more worthy of notice in him, because it was united with qualities which many are accustomed to think of a totally opposite description. In the judgment of most men, a devout mind is seldom a practical one; its owner is deemed better suited for meditation than for action, and the world is likely enough to push him aside as one altogether unfit for the real business of life. Now if we want a proof that, notwithstanding this popular view of the matter, devotion is nevertheless not incompatible with a sound and vigorous understanding, we have it in the case of Wykeham. His talents were all of the most essentially practical kind; throughout his life he was distinguished rather as a man of



business than as a profound thinker or an original genius. His mind was just of that class most common among his countrymen in our own day,—active and intelligent, capable of conducting complicated affairs with consummate prudence, and as far as possible removed from any thing fanciful or unreal. Even in his studies, varied as they were in the course of his after-life, he evinced no taste for the abstract and speculative sciences which occupied the scholars of his day. He was a good arithmetician, and a master in the science of geometry; and, above all, he was, as we have just said, an excellent man of business. And yet, with all this, he was devout even from a child; and his devotion was marked by exactly that character of *tenderness* which is supposed to be least in harmony with the practical spirit. He did not deem a deep love of God and of His blessed Mother inconsistent with a plain, common-sense view of things; and the very first thing recorded about him is his singular love of prayer. Whilst still a schoolboy his favourite place of resort was the old cathedral, old even in his day, and full of memorials of the Saxon times; and the long hours he spent within its venerable walls had no small influence upon his after-life. It was scarcely the same cathedral as the one now standing; for, as we shall see, he himself lived to rebuild it almost entirely, substituting throughout a great proportion of the building the exquisite architecture of the fourteenth century for the heavy Norman style which had prevailed in the earlier erection. Yet, though the old church of St. Swithin's, as it was then called, was wanting in much of the architectural beauty which we now admire, it had treasures of its own of which the cathedral of our day is wholly destitute. Like so many of the holy and beautiful houses with which Catholic piety had covered the land, it had been enriched by the devout zeal of successive generations, until it had become a very marvel of all that was glorious in art.

Let us go back in imagination five hundred years, and entering the ever-open doors, let us accompany the young Winchester schoolboy in one of those daily visits of devotion which he was accustomed to make to the shrines and



altars of the old cathedral. What a contrast every thing would present to the modern aspect of the place! At the first glance, we should miss the delicate clustered pillars of the present nave, and might probably be disposed to criticise the massive columns and semicircular arches filling their place as heavy and ungraceful. None of the beautiful chantries which now decorate the church would be seen, these being of a date later than that of which we speak. Yet, in spite of this, we should feel that the old building was warmer and brighter than it now is; and our eyes would wander from one chapel to another, not, as now, empty and deserted, but each furnished with its altar, where, if our visit were an early one, the Masses would be following one another in quick succession, attended in turn by little groups of devout assistants.

Passing up the nave, we should have paused before entering the gates which lead into the choir to admire the great crucifix, with the figures of our Lady and St. John, all in solid gold, and adorned with jewels, which was placed above the rood-screen. It was the gift of Archbishop Stigand; another of similar workmanship, but of smaller size, was presented by Henry de Blois, and stood over the altar. Then, stepping into the choir, the high altar itself would have met our gaze, dazzling us with its extraordinary splendour. Truly no man could doubt that the temples which our forefathers raised were indeed the houses of God. There, at the back, rose the stone reredos, whose delicately-wrought niches contained the images of patron saints; the frontal of the altar was of plated gold enriched with jewels; and in the centre was the tabernacle,—that holy of holies in a Catholic church, whose presence alone would be enough to mark the difference between the ancient and the modern building. It was lofty and of exquisite workmanship, raised still higher on steps, and veiled with draperies richly embroidered in pearls; whilst jewelled reliquaries and images were to be seen between the golden candlesticks which stood on either side. The whole was surmounted by a delicate stone canopy, whose tapering pinnacles might be discerned from the very bottom of the nave; and within this, sus-

pended just above the tabernacle and jewelled crucifix, was the royal crown placed there by Canute as an act of homage to Almighty God, when, on the sea-shore of Southampton, he taught his courtiers that memorable lesson of humility so well known to all readers of English history. And over altar and tabernacle, glittering with gold and gems, fell a soft and many-coloured light from the stained windows of the choir, on which might be traced in gorgeous hues the figures of the patron saints of Winchester.

Behind the high altar, we should have found our way into a chapel where Mass was celebrated every morning directly after chapter, and where devout pilgrims might have been seen at all hours, kneeling before the rich shrine which contained the relics of St. Swithin. Yet further on we should have come to the Lady Chapel, forming the eastern extremity of the building; but its walls, instead of appearing, as now, bare and ruinous, then gleamed with rich colours, being decorated with paintings representing the chief mysteries of our Lady's life, and of various miracles wrought at her intercession, most of which were taken from the history of our own island. These paintings were not merely ornamental, they were intended as the books of the unlearned; and even now the visitor may read inscriptions under some half-defaced paintings still traceable on the walls, with numbers, evidently referring to some book of explanations, and showing that the whole formed a means of popular instruction, such as was very commonly used in earlier ages. Doubtless this spot was one of frequent resort to Wykeham; and so too, we may infer, was the little chapel hard by, which, from the decorations still remaining, is supposed to have been dedicated to the guardian angels. Possibly it was in this chapel that he first learnt that love for the blessed spirits of heaven which appears to have been one of his favourite devotions, and of which he has left monuments which still remain in the colleges of his foundation. But one altar there was still dearer and more familiar to him than any we have yet named; and thither we will now conduct our readers. Between the fifth and sixth pillars on the southern side of the nave, exactly on the spot now occupied by his own

beautiful chantry, there stood at that time an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; her image might be seen above it; and here a very early Mass was daily said, which was commonly termed the "Pekis-mass," from the name of the monk by whom it was generally celebrated. This image and altar was a place of popular devotion; many graces had been granted there, and the pillars were covered with the votive offerings of our Lady's grateful clients; but by none was the place more frequented than by Wykeham, who every morning assisted at the Pekis-mass, and paid his early devotions before the image of her whom he had chosen from the cradle to be his special mother and patroness. It is thus that the manuscript of Winchester College records this circumstance of his early life: "The venerable father, whilst following his studies at Winchester, was ever most devout to God and holy Church, and was wont to frequent that spot where afterwards his body was laid; and there, before an image of the most blessed Virgin Mary, he every day made special prayers, being accustomed to hear the early Mass of a certain monk, which was vulgarly called the Pekis-mass: thus in childhood conquering the disposition to sloth, and watching unto prayer, according to the words of the blessed Apostle St. Peter." And in the register of the same college it is added: "He held it a sweet custom in these early years to frequent the church, making many prayers, and often assisting at Mass. He had, moreover, a true and special devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, in whose honour he often visited the church of St. Swithin, praying with bended knees before her image, which then stood against one of the pillars of the said church, and humbly beseeching her that he might become worthy to honour, not her only, but also her Divine Son." The love he bore this little sanctuary must have been of no ordinary kind, for we shall find that in the hour of death his thoughts wandered back to the scene of his boyish devotion; and in his last will he gave directions that his body might be laid on the spot where he had so often knelt, and where he had first learnt the sweetness of familiar intercourse with God.

It is evident from what we have said that Wykeham's devotion to our Lady was something special and more than ordinary; and it is so spoken of by all his biographers. He himself was wont to acknowledge himself as indebted to her for all the blessings of his life, and to attribute all his success to her powerful patronage. "He seems," says a Protestant writer,\* speaking of his early years, "even then to have chosen her as his peculiar patroness, to have placed himself under her protection, and in a manner to have dedicated himself to her service." This is well nigh all we know of his boyhood, but it is enough; the simple fact that he was a child of Mary, "dedicated to her service" whilst all the grace and purity of baptism still rested on him in its untarnished brightness, tells us the whole secret of his spiritual life. Who needs be told of the peculiar loveliness of a soul that has been early consecrated to Mary, and through life has kept itself true and loyal to her sweet and gracious sovereignty? The fragrance of its humility, its purity, its deep interior peace, has been made familiar to us in the lives of a thousand saints; and if it be true that among all the varieties of sanctity with which God has enriched His Church, a special charm attaches to those the freshness of whose innocence has been kept unsullied under the sheltering mantle of the Queen of Virgins, we may safely claim our readers' interest in the Winchester schoolboy, of whom as yet we know no more than that for the love of Mary he rose at day-break, and daily offered himself and his whole being to God through her maternal hands.

When his school-education was over, Uvedale did not desert him: he took him into his own family, where he discharged the office of secretary. Uvedale, as constable of the castle, resided at Winchester; and it was here, as is generally supposed, that the young secretary had the opportunity of first displaying his taste and skill in architecture, on the occasion of certain repairs and alterations made in the building by his patron. He soon became a favourite with the governor; and, indeed, he had many of those natural gifts which are calculated to win men's favour

\* Dr. Lowth, Bishop of Oxford.

and esteem. He was short in stature, but his noble bearing was such as scarcely betokened a lowly birth; and he had a peculiarly graceful and appropriate manner of expressing himself, so that, we are told, "whether he wrote or spoke, he was never at a loss for words." He wrote, too, in clear and beautiful characters,—a valuable accomplishment in those days; and we may easily fancy that the brave constable, who was more of a soldier than a scholar, must have found a treasure in his secretary, with his ready flow of words and his beautiful penmanship. It was soon discovered that he could transact business quite as well in person as in writing, and that his tongue was no less eloquent than his pen. It was on the occasion of some services of more than usual importance which he had rendered to Sir Nicholas, that the latter, wishing still further to advance him, introduced him to the notice of William de Edington, or Edyndon, the newly-elected Bishop of Winchester, who was at that time treasurer to King Edward III. Some writers represent him as having studied at Oxford during this period of his life; but this is more than doubtful, and is in direct contradiction to the fact so constantly stated by all early historians, of his never having received a learned education.

He was still very young when Edington first introduced him to the notice of the king, in whose service he thenceforth remained. Reference is made to the early age at which he entered the royal service in some of the licenses granted to his colleges by Richard II., who speaks of him as having "even from his youth worthily and faithfully served both his father and grandfather by his counsels and opportune aids in many weighty affairs, wherein he often bore both labours and expense." The exact circumstances which first attracted the notice of the king do not appear; we find, however, that not long after the celebrated siege of Calais, Edward III., having returned to England, spent some days at Winchester; and it was probably on this occasion that Wykeham's handsome person and graceful address, and, above all, his engineering and architectural talents, won for him the royal favour. "He was," says Harpsfield, "another Euclid in geometry;" and he had already earned a



reputation as an architect. Edward was just then full of building plans, and the Bishop of Winchester could hardly have done him a more acceptable service than by presenting him with one well qualified to carry them into execution. Nor was it long before the merits and attractive manners of the young architect secured for him a degree of friendship and intimacy, both with the king and his gallant son the Black Prince, to which the office occupied by Wykeham, as well as his lowly birth, would scarcely have entitled him. "He was," we are told, "before long admitted among the first and principal of the king's familiar friends." Of the history of the next ten years of his life we know nothing; even the exact position he occupied in the king's service appears uncertain; and the first appointment which he appears to have received was to an ecclesiastical benefice, the living, namely, of Irstead in Norfolk, which was bestowed on him so early as the year 1349, though he had not as yet received even minor orders. It appears, however, from the title of *clericus* attached to his name in several of the royal patents, that he had already determined on embracing the ecclesiastical state, and had received the tonsure.

In 1356 we find him appointed clerk of the king's works in the manors of Henley and Yeshampstead, by a patent wherein his fidelity and circumspection are commended as worthy of the royal trust and confidence; and a few months later he was named surveyor and chief custodian of the yet more important works then in hand at the park and castle of Windsor; he being, as we are assured, at the period of this appointment renowned as the most skilful architect in the kingdom. The works at Windsor on which he was engaged were undertaken by King Edward III., immediately after that celebrated festival of St. George which had witnessed the foundation of the new Order of the Garter, amid all the pomp and pride of chivalric display. The scheme contemplated by the king was to make Windsor the home and centre of the Order, which did not merely confer an empty title of honour on its members, but included many charitable and religious objects. The chapel now dedicated to St. George, which had been

begun in the previous reign, was completed ; and by a bull of Pope Clement VI. a college of canons was attached to it, for the perpetual celebration of the divine offices, and for the maintenance of a certain number of poor knights, who were to pray for the souls of the knights-companions living and dead. It was at the altar of this chapel, on the festival above named, that five-and-twenty of the best knights of England, headed by their gallant sovereign, offered their arms to God, and solemnly consecrated themselves to His service. It was like the inauguration of a reign of romance, the design being gravely set forth to be the restoration of King Arthur's round table, which, according to the tradition then popularly received, had been established at the castle founded in old time at Windsor by that renowned hero. All the nobles of England were summoned to attend the ceremony, and heralds had proclaimed it through every nation in Europe, offering a passport of fifteen days to all knights and esquires, of whatever country and language, who might desire to assist at the spectacle. The invitation was largely accepted, for Edward's scheme was exactly in harmony with the tastes of the age ; "it appeared to all men," says Froissart, "highly honourable, and capable of increasing love and friendship." So there were tournaments and most quaint shows and devices—all the display of chivalry, at this its most showy, though not perhaps its purest and most illustrious age ; and when the brilliant festival was over, Edward determined on forming the buildings already commenced by his predecessor into a vast royal castle, which was to be the home and centre of all Christian knighthood. This was in 1344 ; so that it would seem that the works must have advanced but slowly before they were put into Wykeham's hands. It needed but a rapid inspection from his correct and masterly eye to convince him that no grand or harmonious design could ever result from patching together and adding to the erections of less skilful architects ; and it was by his advice, therefore, that in 1359 Edward consented to clear the ground of the greater part of the buildings already standing, and recommence the whole work on a uniform plan. The works were now set forward in good earnest ; three

hundred and sixty masons were pressed for the purpose, according to the arbitrary custom of the day; and the buildings were carried on for more than seven years with no stint of expenditure. At the end of that time, a sum equivalent to 50,000*l.* of our money had been charged to the works of Windsor, and the castle was completed on a grand and majestic scale. The towers, and most of the ancient part still standing, are portions of Wykeham's work. A story has been told in connection with his architectural labours at Windsor, and repeated by all his biographers, till it has become too popular for us to omit; though most writers agree in thinking it of doubtful authenticity. It is said, however, that when the building was finished, he caused to be sculptured on one of the walls a scroll, with the words, "This made Wykeham." The courtiers, continues the story, jealous of the favour shown by the king to one they despised as a low-born adventurer, represented to their royal master that his architect had done this in order to claim for himself the credit of the whole undertaking. Edward's pride was roused; but Wykeham appeased his anger by explaining his meaning to be, not that he had made the castle, but that the castle had made him, inasmuch as it had secured for him the royal patronage and favour. This tale, familiar as it has become, rests, however, on nothing better than idle tradition. Archbishop Parker is the first who relates it, without reference to his authority; and probably its only worth is as an apt illustration of the ambiguity of our English tongue, which, as Parker remarks, "rarely discriminates in its cases."

Meanwhile the services rendered by Wykeham to the king were receiving the most substantial acknowledgments; preferments, both civil and ecclesiastical, were rapidly heaped upon him; and his acceptance of these ecclesiastical benefices before he had yet received even minor orders, and as a mere means of revenue, tarnishes in some degree a character otherwise so stainless in its integrity. The holding of benefices by laymen, and the existence of pluralities, were, indeed, among the abuses of the times, and Wykeham's case was not a singular one; nevertheless it is a disagreeable feature in his early life, and probably



gave rise to the charge brought against him by his enemies of an over love of money. In 1357 he was presented to the rectory of Pulham in Norfolk; which presentation was immediately opposed by the Pope's consistory at Rome, which prosecuted him for illegally holding this benefice, together with many others that had cure of souls; but we are told that King Edward confirmed it to him by patent under the great seal, in order to enable him by royal authority to hold it at the same time with other preferments. If this were all that we knew of the matter, we could not acquit Wykeham of a grave offence, in supporting himself in an illegal position by the power of the crown exerted in opposition to the law of the Church; but, happily for his good fame, we find the dispute terminated three years later by his own voluntary resignation of the benefice. A pluralist, however, he certainly was; and we dare not make so large a demand on the patience of our readers as to give them the list of his church preferments as they stand in Dr. Lowth's biography, where their mere enumeration occupies several pages. They included seventeen prebendal stalls, three rectories, the archdeaconry of Lincoln, and the deanery of St. Martin-le-Grand. Their revenues amounted to the sum of 870*l.*, an immense amount in those days; and we can only say in justification of their holder, that if his wealth, and the source whence it was derived, earns for him any portion of our readers' displeasure, the good use he made of his money must be taken as making no small atonement.

It must not, however, be supposed that he held *all* these preferments whilst still a layman, though some sinecures undoubtedly he did so hold. We find him ordained acolyte in 1361, by his old patron Bishop Edington; early in the following year he received the orders of subdeacon and deacon; and finally, in 1362, he was ordained priest by the same Bishop in his chapel at Southwark. The deanery of St. Martin's he held only three years, during which time he rebuilt at his own expense the whole of the church and cloister.

His character as an ecclesiastic did not in any way interfere with his labours as chief warden and architect of

the royal castles. In 1361 we find him busily engaged in the difficult task of erecting a castle on the swampy island of Sheppey, at the mouth of the Thames, "for the strength of the realm and the protection of the inhabitants." The coasts of England suffered grievously in those days by descents of French and other marauders, and a better site could not have been chosen for the new castle of Queenborough, as it was called in compliment to the good queen Philippa of Hainault. Unusual obstacles in the ground did but call forth the skill of the architect: the soil being too soft to sustain the walls, they were built on wooden piles driven into the ground; and a stately castle was thus raised on the desolate spot. No ruins, however, now remain of the noble keep, "shaped like a five-leaved rose," with its five towers of defence; nor of the grand embattled gateway, and the raised platforms for the deadly discharge of arrows. It is probable that most of the other royal castles were either rebuilt or repaired about the same time by the same masterly hand.

But Wykeham's position in the royal councils was one of far higher trust than we should gather from the character of his employments. Just before his ordination as acolyte, we find him appearing as one of the "six masters, noble men," who were witnesses to the solemn ratification of the treaty of Bretigni; and the fact of his assisting at the ceremony in that character proves that the surveyor of the royal works had come to be a man of some importance at court. This celebrated treaty promised a close to the long wars between France and England, which had lasted through the greater part of Edward's reign; wars unjust in their origin, though the injustice has been concealed from our view by the brilliancy of those achievements and victories which still render the names of Cressy and Poitiers so dear to English ears. Nevertheless, as we have said before, the chivalry of the French wars was a very different chivalry from that of the Crusades: men were beginning to fight for glory rather than for a good and noble cause, for national aggrandisement instead of the defence of the faith. The whole history of Edward's reign is a proof that the religious element of chivalry had

already begun to decay ; although, even in its decay, there was not wanting evidence to show how strong had once been its preponderance. Up to the victory of Poitiers, which left King John of France a prisoner in the hands of the Black Prince, fortune had seemed to favour the pretensions of the English monarch. But on the recommencement of hostilities the tide turned against him. Looking haughtily on the French people, as though they were lying at his mercy, he would accept of no terms from them but unconditional submission. The very extravagance of his demands provoked their national spirit, and roused them to a gallant resistance. The campaign of 1360 was a disastrous one to the English ; it had none of those brilliant successes which had hitherto attended their arms ; and but a few months after the English king had landed at Calais, at the head of an army so magnificent that, it is said, its equal had not been raised in the island for more than a century, he had the mortification of beholding it in full retreat from the walls of Paris, in all the confusion and suffering that accompany defeat. Not, indeed, that any great reverse had attended their arms ; but Heaven itself seemed to rebuke the unholy ambition which alone prolonged the war, and to fight against the standards of Edward. Famine thinned his troops : yet to every overture of peace he still returned the same haughty demands, requiring absolute sovereignty over the third part of France as a condition of his renouncing his claim to the French crown, which had been the original pretext for the war ; and these terms the French as resolutely rejected. It was at Chartres, that city so dear to Frenchmen, and deemed by them under the peculiar and perpetual protection of the Blessed Virgin, that the pride and obstinacy of Edward were broken at last by what seemed an expression of the Divine displeasure. The French envoys and the Pope's legate had equally failed in their efforts to shake his stern and implacable temper ; the very sufferings of his army appeared to have no power to move him. It was now in full retreat ; want and fatigue had combined to reduce its numbers ; and the road towards Brittany was to be tracked by the dead bodies of men and horses. As they approached

Chartres, the troops were overtaken by a storm so terrible, that nothing similar to it is recorded in history;\* wind, hail, and lightning, seemed all to unite in order to wreak their fury on the unhappy soldiers, already more than half exhausted. Thousands are said to have perished on that one night without an enemy's arm being raised to strike them; and in the midst of the frightful scene, the conscience of the king was roused from slumber. "The sight of his followers perishing around him awakened in his heart a sense of the horrors occasioned by his ambition. In a fit of remorse he sprang from his saddle, and stretching his arm towards the cathedral of Chartres, he vowed to God and the Virgin that he would no longer object to proposals of peace, provided they were compatible with the preservation of his honour."†

The treaty of Bretigni, usually called "the great peace," was the result; and it was at the solemn ratification of this treaty, which took place at Calais, that we find Wykeham assisting for the first time in the capacity of an officer of the state. The scene was every way characteristic of the age, and had all the solemnity of a religious ceremony. in conformity with that great principle which, amid a thousand errors, still gave to the semi-barbarous period of the middle ages one vast superiority over our own,—that principle which recognised no act, whether political or domestic, from which the power and influence of the Christian faith were to be excluded,—the treaty which was to restore peace between two great nations was to be no mere signing of papers between state-ministers, but a religious transaction, ratified by an oath solemnly administered to both sovereigns before the altar of God. "Edward and John met in the church of St. Nicholas, ascended the steps, and knelt together before the platform of the altar. Audoyne, abbot of Clugni, the papal envoy, who celebrated Mass, turned to them after the consecration, holding in his hand the paten with the Sa-

\* Froissart says, that it seemed as though the world had come to an end, and that the hailstones were so large as to kill both men and beasts.

† Lingard.

cred Host upon it, and having by his side the Bishops of Winchester and Boulogne, who supported the Missal. He recapitulated in their hearing the chief articles of the treaty to which they were going to swear. Then Edward, after a short pause, addressed the King of France. 'Fair brother,' he said, 'I warn you that it is not my intention to be bound by this oath, unless you on your part faithfully observe all the articles of this treaty.' John signified his assent; and placing one hand on the paten, and the other on the Missal, he swore by the Body of Christ and the holy Gospels. He was followed by Edward; and a similar oath was administered to twenty-four French and twenty-seven English princes and barons."\*

Wykeham's advance was now rapid: in 1363 he was appointed warden and justiciary of the king's forests south of the Trent; the next year saw him keeper of the privy-seal; two years later he is styled secretary to the king; and a little afterwards we find him addressed as "chief of the Privy Council," a title which seems to indicate that he was then considered one of the principal ministers of state. When, in 1366, he was called on, in obedience to the new bull of Pope Urban V. against pluralities, to give an account of all his preferments to the metropolitan, we find him spoken of as "Sir William de Wykeham, Archdeacon of Lincoln, Secretary of our lord the illustrious King of England, and Keeper of his Privy Seal."

Froissart bears witness to the influence he exerted over the royal counsels. "There was," he says, "at this time a priest about the King of England, who was so great with the king that all things were done by him, and without him was nothing done." He was no longer employed as a mere surveyor of public works, but on the most honourable and important affairs of state. The victory of Neville's Cross had placed David King of Scotland as a prisoner in Edward's hands; and Wykeham was among the commissioners despatched to the north to arrange the terms of his ransom and to negotiate a truce. In one act of pardon he is termed "the chief of the Privy Council, and the Governor of the Great Council." The

\* Lingard.



exact office held under these titles can scarcely be stated, but it is quite evident that he was acting as what we should now call a minister of state. There is sufficient evidence that in this capacity his influence was constantly exerted in support of a liberal and enlightened policy; for Wykeham was as far as possible removed from those royal favourites who seek to build their own fortunes out of the plunder of the nation. The MS. of Winchester College particularly refers to his efforts to relieve the national burdens. "He constantly preserved the people of the land" (it is said) "from subsidies, exactions, and other like oppressions." And remembering how large an advance was made during the reign of the third Edward towards the constitutional liberty of his subjects, we cannot doubt that many rights then granted to them were obtained by the counsels of Wykeham, who ever showed himself a firm and disinterested supporter of the popular cause.

The union of the two characters of statesman and ecclesiastic may appear to some as strange as that of ecclesiastic and royal architect; but at that time there was nothing unusual in such a combination. In days when every man was a soldier, few besides churchmen had the amount of education necessary to qualify them for public business; and though Wykeham was, as we have seen, deficient in scholastic learning, and had never studied at any university, yet his acquirements were precisely those most valuable in a public minister; he being, as John of Malvern expresses it, "very acute, and a man of prodigious industry." His biographer, Dr. Thomas Chaundler, tells us that though he never went through any of the schools, either of arts, theology, or either kind of law, "yet in practical wisdom he was a most wise man." Moreover, by the "prodigious industry" above alluded to he made up for the deficiencies of his early education, and amassed an amount of learning which surpassed in degree that of most men of his own standing, as it appears also in many respects to have differed from it in kind.

However, though there was nothing unusual in the fact of a churchman administering the affairs of the king-

dom, it was somewhat unprecedented for such powers to be exercised by a simple priest; and Edward, who was resolved on elevating him to the highest offices of the state, determined at the same time to make his ecclesiastical dignity keep pace with his position in the royal counsels. This appears to have been one of his motives for proposing the elevation of his favourite minister to the episcopacy; but it is quite evident that his political consequence could not have been Wykeham's only, or even his principal, recommendation to the vacant see of Winchester. Had he exhibited no better qualification for such a promotion than the services he had rendered as an architect, as warden of the royal forests, or even as royal secretary and keeper of the privy seal,—we should have found some traces of popular indignation, or, more probably still, of graver censures from the ever-watchful See of Rome, when the news was spread abroad that the able minister who had built up his fortunes by his own unwearied labours was about to be placed among the mitred prelates of England. Far from this being the case, however, we find him universally acknowledged as the fittest man for the sacred charge about to be imposed upon him. One dissentient voice alone can we detect amid the otherwise general murmur of applause: it is the sneer uttered by a morose and fanatic priest, whose career, as it was contemporary with that of Wykeham, may well be contrasted with it in its character and results. It came from Wickliff, who, in one of his incendiary tracts published at the time of Wykeham's elevation, remarks that nowadays "lords will not present a clerk able and cunning in God's law, but a kitchen clerk, or a penny clerk, or *one wise in building castles*, or in worldly doing, though he cannot well read his Psalter." He certainly did not foresee, as he wrote these words, that the man he thus sought to depreciate for his supposed ignorance was destined to do more for the advancement of learning than any other prelate who had yet appeared in the English Church; and he perhaps as little looked forward to the occasion which should bring him in personal conflict with the despised, castle-building Bishop. If we may credit Wood, the his-

torian of Oxford, there were not wanting jealous tongues among the courtiers who repeated the calumnious sneer. Some of them, he tells us, represented to the king that his secretary's want of learning rendered him unworthy of the dignity to which he proposed to raise him. Wykeham's reply shows that his thoughts had already revolved some such scheme for the promotion of education as that he afterwards so nobly realised. "Sire," he said to the king, "I am indeed unworthy; but wherein I am wanting myself, I will supply by a brood of more scholars than all the prelates of England have ever shown."

Difficulties, however, lay in the way of Wykeham's succession to the see of Winchester. Edington, the late Bishop and his own early friend, died on the 8th October 1366; and the king at once recommended his secretary to the election of the prior and convent of St. Swithin's, who formed the cathedral chapter. But this election in virtue of the royal *congé-d'élire* was an encroachment on the rights of the Holy See, which had reserved to itself the next appointment of the bishopric during the lifetime of Edington. The question in debate was not the fitness of Wykeham for the post, for almost immediately on his election by the chapter we find the Pope nominating him *administrator* of the spiritualities and temporalities of the see; but he could not give leave for his consecration as *Bishop* until the important point was settled from whom he was to derive his jurisdiction, whether from the See of Peter or from the English crown. In fact, the matter involved that old dispute between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities which was eventually destined to separate England from the unity of the Church altogether; and the manner in which the question was in the present case set at rest bears high testimony to the respect entertained for Wykeham's character as an ecclesiastic. Had his advancement to the episcopate been a mere act of court favour and convenience, to which his own merits and qualifications in no way entitled him, nothing would have been easier than for the Pope to set aside his election altogether. The right of appointment to vacant bishoprics was then a matter of fierce dispute between the Holy See



and the English crown; and for the Pope at such a juncture to accept a person nominated by the king, was in appearance to pay some degree of deference to the royal claims. Wykeham's supposed deficiency in ecclesiastical learning would certainly, had it really existed, have constituted a sufficiently solid ground for resisting his nomination; and we are therefore forced to conclude that his merits must needs have been very great in the eyes of both parties, when we find them mutually agreeing to waive something of their jealously-contested rights in order to hasten his consecration.

The matter was settled by compromise; the Duke of Bourbon, one of the French hostages, undertaking the delicate negotiation. The Pope's bull of provision, as it was termed, was addressed to "William *Bishop-elect* of Winchester," the validity of the election being thus acknowledged; while, on the other hand, the king in his letters-patent, wherein he grants him the temporalities of his see, acknowledges him "*Bishop of Winchester by the Pope's provision*," without naming his election.

In the papal bull by which Urban V. gives leave for his consecration, he is spoken of as recommended to this dignity "for his knowledge of letters, his goodness of life and manners, and his prudence and circumspection in affairs both spiritual and temporal;" phrases which do not appear to be part of the usual formula, and which assuredly would not have been inserted had Wykeham been nothing but the ignorant clerk, cunning only in building castles, that Wickliff had represented him.

This affair of his nomination as Bishop took a full year to settle, and before its termination he was raised to the highest office in the state, being made Lord High Chancellor of England in the September of 1367. In the Record Office of Westminster, among other more important papers, may yet be seen the "Memorandum of divers things bought for the breakfast of the Lord Chancellor and Treasurer William de Wykeham, and of many other magnates of the council of my lord the king," with the exact number of goats, buzzards, doves, shrimps, and congers there consumed, together with the charges of

John the cook. But a more splendid and solemn festival was held in the following month, when he received episcopal consecration, in the cathedral church of St. Paul's, from the hands of the primate, Simon de Langham; and, in the July of the next year, was formally enthroned in his own cathedral of Winchester by the procurator of the Cardinal Archdeacon of Canterbury.

It must have been a touching and wonderful ceremony to him. Amid the splendour of the pontifical rites, did his eyes, think you, never wander down the nave, and rest, blinded with devout and grateful tears, on the spot where he had so often knelt in boyish days, and on the image of her whom his heart still owned as his Mistress and his Mother? To many it might have been an unwelcome humiliation to be appointed to a see where the story of his humble origin and early fortunes was so perfectly known, and where these things might have been made the subject of continual petty mortifications. But Wykeham's mind was superior to pettiness of every kind. It is hinted by several writers that his appointment to the see of Winchester rather than to that of Canterbury, which was also vacant a little before the death of Edington, was in accordance with his own wishes, and that his choice of the inferior dignity arose from the love he bore his native place. So far from considering his lowly birth and the manner in which he had raised himself from obscurity by his own talents and labour as any reproach, he looked on it as a subject of honest pride, which he evinced in a way sufficiently significant in those times when heraldry was a sort of emblematical language, and the devices which each man chose were supposed to embody some favourite principle, or to refer to some eventful incident in his family history. Every trade and profession had then its heraldic device; and Wykeham was content to choose for his coat-of-arms that usually assigned to the craft of carpenters and house-builders, in allusion to his early profession, adding the motto, "Manners maketh man."

We cannot but feel some surprise when we find the noble biographer of the English chancellors detecting nothing more in this celebrated motto than an acknowledg-

ment of "how much he owed to his delicate attention to the feelings of others."\* As though the "manners" here alluded to were those little acts of courtesy or courtliness by which a man may hope to win the favour of those who can help him on in life. Assuredly Wykeham intended to give expression to some loftier principle than this: his motto was the utterance of that noble independence of mind which was the distinguishing feature of his character; and by it he would have us to understand that a man's true nobility consists less in his ancient blood, or official dignity, than in the uprightness of his heart and conduct. In no country or age is such a principle more needful to be remembered than our own, where talents and industry are every day raising men above the station to which they were born, and wealth is continually disputing the preëminence with hereditary nobility. Where this is the case, there is always the temptation for a man to be ashamed of his lowly origin, and to assume the pretensions of a higher rank. But Wykeham's motto should ring in the ears of all such, unceasingly reminding them, that where nobility of birth is wanting, nobility of soul—that is, a simple following of the laws of Christian courtesy and Christian justice—will amply supply the defect, and make a lowly origin itself a source of honour to him who has raised himself by his merits. Among the very few of Wykeham's words which have been preserved to posterity, there occurs a simple saying, often in his mouth, which shows how deeply graven in his heart was the feeling which his motto expressed: "There can be no true dignity," he was wont to say, "where there is no high principle." In the career on which he was now entering, we shall see how perfectly he justified his own words, and satisfied the world that no royal patent of nobility could have shed half the lustre on his name that was cast on it by his own upright life and munificent benevolence.

\* Lord Campbell.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CHANCELLOR-BISHOP.

IN the preceding pages we have had to draw somewhat on our readers' patience. Wykeham's public career, or rather that portion of it which is best known, and possesses the greatest interest, did not commence till he was forty-three years of age. Up to that time, we have but the brief imperfect memoranda which indicate to us the persevering labours by which he was ascending from obscurity to greatness. Some, indeed, may be disposed at this stage of our story to question his title to greatness altogether, and to class him with a multitude of other plodding, business-like men, who have learnt and practised the art of getting-on in life. Such men can never become popular heroes: we are provoked at being forced into unwilling praise of their painstaking cleverness; but admiration, in its truest sense, we never give them; for a hero must possess some higher claim upon our sympathy than mere success.

But, as we have just hinted, our story is as yet scarcely begun. During all this time Wykeham had been passing through a severe ordeal: he had been exposed to all those worldly influences whose effects are usually the most corrupting; and yet, when he came back to minister as chief pastor in the church which thirty years before had been the scene of his youthful devotions, he brought with him a heart whose simplicity and fervour had been kept untarnished and unchanged.

He was not, however, able to enter at once on the administration of his diocese. It wanted him badly enough; for during the lifetime of the late Bishop both its spiritualities and temporalities had been somewhat depressed. But Wykeham's duties as chancellor detained him at court, and it appears probable that, up to the period of his first visitation, which he held in 1373, he was obliged to leave most of the government of his see in the hands of his commissary-general, John de Wormenhale. In fact, however crying were the wants of his diocese, those of the kingdom were just then yet more urgent. A fresh war had broken

out since the conclusion of the treaty of Bretigni. The French provinces ceded to the English crown had been assigned to the government of the Black Prince, with the title of Prince of Aquitaine. He fixed his residence at Bourdeaux, where his great renown drew round him the most brilliant court in Christendom. It was looked on as the home of all true knighthood, and every one who was in distress deemed he could do no better than appeal for protection to the chivalry of the Prince of Aquitaine. It was on this romantic principle of succouring the distressed, without regard to their merit, that he engaged in a war for the restoration of one of the most bloody and perfidious princes who had ever disgraced a royal crown. This was Pedro the Cruel, king of Castile, whose crimes are thus briefly enumerated by Froissart: "He had by different means caused the death of the mother of his three half-brothers, which, as was natural, caused them great displeasure: he had banished and murdered all the greatest barons of Castile. He was withal of such a horrid disposition, that all men feared, suspected, and hated him, but dared not show it." To which he adds, that he had poisoned his wife, had made an alliance with the infidels, had seized the ecclesiastical revenues, cast the priests of holy Church into prison, and vexed them with all sorts of tyranny. The Pope calling him to appear at Avignon, and clear himself of these foul charges, he drove away the ambassadors of the Holy Father with insults. Then his subjects rose against him; and, weary of the yoke of such a monster, chose his half-brother Henry to reign in his stead. Urban V. in solemn consistory excommunicated him as an infidel; the King of Arragon offered free passage through his kingdom to all who desired to enter Castile and attack King Pedro; whilst in France, nearly every knight of honour and renown joined the standard of Henry, and prepared to take part in a war which they looked on almost as a crusade.

The Black Prince alone refused to join the expedition; in his eye it was a violation of the laws of chivalry; and accordingly, when, a few months later, Don Pedro was driven as a fugitive from his kingdom, the few friends who



kept faithful to him could offer him no better advice than to throw himself on the generosity of the Prince of Wales. "He is," they said, "of such a noble and gallant disposition, that he will certainly take compassion on you; and if he be determined to restore you to your throne, none can withstand him; for he is dreaded by the whole world, and beloved by all true knights." Pedro acted on this advice: he appealed to the knightly honour of the prince to restore him to his rights; and the appeal was heard. It soon became known that the standards of Edward were once more displayed, and ere long a numerous and gallant army gathered around what men had learnt to look upon as the ensigns of certain victory. A campaign followed, glorious in its achievements, yet, as it proved, most disastrous in its ultimate results to the English. Never was a bad cause more gallantly maintained. Pedro was forced back upon a nation that detested him; and the military renown of the Black Prince gained additional lustre at the great victory of Navaretto. But Pedro, once restored to his crown, proved faithless to all his engagements: he refused to furnish his allies with either money or provisions, and left them to gather what subsistence they could out of the plunder of his own unhappy peasantry. A fatal sickness fastened on the prince, which eventually bore him to his grave. He returned to Aquitaine, enfeebled with disease, and embarrassed by enormous expenses which he had no means of meeting; and a full tide of disaster set in upon him. Unable to keep his engagements with his troops, or to satisfy their just demands, his wounded honour felt the disgrace which had been thrust on him by the perfidy of his ally; and soon complaints came in from all quarters of the outrages committed by his "free companies," who, short of pay, made incursions through France, "doing," says Froissart, "so much mischief, and such wicked acts, as caused great tribulation." To relieve himself from his difficulties, he proposed to lay a tax on the lands of his French subjects; and then all Aquitaine rose in arms. Under the vassalage of France they had borne no taxes, and they would suffer none to be imposed by an English prince. The French king fomented the discord, and sum-

moned Edward, as his vassal, to Paris, to answer the complaints of his oppressed subjects. "We will willingly attend," was his fierce reply, "since the King of France sends for us; but it shall be with our helmet on our head, and at the head of sixty thousand men."

In short, "the great peace" was at an end. Hostilities broke out in every province subject to the English arms; but the hero, who had hitherto led those arms to certain victory, was now forced to remain sick and inactive at Bourdeaux, a prey to bitter melancholy, as week after week brought the news of some fresh disaster, and told of some new province torn from his enfeebled grasp. Ponthieu was irrecoverably lost, nor was this the worst; for before long it became evident that the English would have to stand on the defensive upon their own shores. The Scots were in alliance with the French, and threatened the northern frontier of the kingdom; whilst tidings came that great armaments of ships were being prepared in all the ports of France, for the purpose of invading and laying waste the English coasts. "The king did not know which part to guard the most," says Froissart; "and, to speak truth, the English were very much alarmed." In spite of his declining years and failing energies, King Edward prepared for a defence which should be worthy of his great renown. Large detachments of men were sent northwards to keep the Scots at bay; whilst a fleet was manned with incredible despatch, which swept the English Channel, and cleared it of every enemy. The disingenuous conduct of the King of France had annulled the engagements of the treaty of Bretigni; and Edward resolved at once to demand of his parliament whether, under these circumstances, he did not stand justified in re-assuming his old pretensions on the French crown.

Such was the state of affairs when, on the 27th of May 1369, the great Council of the English nation was assembled in the painted chamber of Westminster Palace, and Wykeham for the first time appeared before them to exercise his office of chancellor, by declaring to them, in the king's name, the causes of their meeting. He did so in a way at once unusual, and characteristic of his peculiar



simplicity and independence of mind. Up to his time, it had been the custom with the chancellors of England to deliver their addresses to parliament after the fashion of a theological disputation. "It was almost their constant practice," says Dr. Lowth, "to lay down some text of Scripture by way of thesis for their discourse, and to spend some time in dividing and subdividing it, and making very injudicious applications of it to the occasion. Not satisfied with this, they would frequently go out of their way to introduce still more quotations of Scripture, and would continue their discourse as impertinently as they began it." Wykeham was the first who broke through this custom, and thought fit to speak to the point in question in the language of a statesman. His speech was delivered, moreover, not in Latin, but in the Norman-French language; and in it he gave a plain and straightforward account of the whole state of public affairs. A few days later, the lords and commons with one consent made answer to the king, that "he might with a good conscience take to himself the style and title of King of France, and use his arms as heretofore."

In consequence of this decision, new seals were engraved, bearing the lilies of France quartered with the lions of England, and delivered to the keeping of the lord chancellor. Every effort was made to carry on the war with vigour, and to sustain the credit of the English name; but the national spirit of the French was fairly roused. "Every man-at-arms in France was eager to do battle with the Prince of Wales," says Froissart; and whilst the English fought for honour and for conquest, the arms of the French were nerved with the resolve to restore the liberty of their country, and to drive the intruding foreigners back upon their own shores. City after city fell into their hands, or their garrisons declared themselves Frenchmen; and still the sickness of the prince gained ground, so that at length he was unable to mount his war-horse, and a moody melancholy spread over his soul. Alas for the greatness of the world's best heroes, when it rests on no better foundation than that of human honour! The Black Prince is represented in history as the mirror of chivalry,

and so perhaps he was; but let it be well noted that the chivalry of which he was the model was the chivalry of honour, and not that of the Cross. The distance which separates a character such as his from the standard aimed at by Godfrey de Bouillon, or the great Tancred, marks the vast interval between a heroism which has its origin in human passion, and that which is guided by a lofty principle of faith. Gregory XI. repeatedly complains, that whilst the arms of the French and English were turned against one another, the power of the infidel was daily on the increase. In fact, the date of the victory of Poitiers corresponds within a few years with that of the first settlement of the Turks on the European shores: there was no longer an army of the Cross to keep them back. In the hour of conquest and success, Edward the Black Prince dazzled all Europe by his gallantry, his honour, his romantic and punctilious courtesy to a fallen enemy; in the hour of disaster and disappointment, he stained his great name by cruel and vindictive acts, and the slaughter of Limoges went far to wipe out the glory of Poitiers and Navarette. When tidings came to him that Limoges had become French, he swore by the soul of his father to be revenged on the citizens; and terribly did he keep his oath. The city fell, and three thousand innocent beings,—men, women, and children,—who had had no part in the treachery of the garison, were slaughtered in cold blood; whilst the prince lay in his litter, and coldly turned away from those who begged for mercy at his feet. “There was no heart in Limoges so hardened,” says Froissart, “or that had any sense of religion, that did not bewail the events of that day;” and the dreadful scene seemed to bring its own punishment with it, by increasing the black and heavy depression which weighed down the soul of Edward, and against which it was harder for him to struggle than against bodily sickness itself. His eldest son died about the same time; and at length, utterly broken down, he was forced to resign the government of his duchy into the hands of his brother, the Duke of Lancaster, and to return to England, where he spent his few remaining years in suffering and retirement.

The French flag now waved over every city in France, with the exception of the three strongholds of Calais, Bourdeaux, and Bayonne. Charles V., elated with success, threatened to hang his mailed glove on the gates of London. Ships again collected in Harfleur and the neighbouring ports, and a fresh attempt of invasion was threatened. Again parliament assembled, and again did Wykeham set forth in simple energetic terms the needs of the country, and the duty which lay at the door of every Englishman to contribute towards the national defence. His appeal was nobly answered; both clergy and people responded to the call by an offering of no less than 100,000*l*. But in this perilous emergency the nation clamoured against the ministers, who had become unpopular through the ill success of the French war; and the parliament, seized with a momentary jealousy of the presence of so many ecclesiastics in the royal councils, petitioned the king for the summary dismissal from office of all churchmen, in order that the conduct of public affairs might be committed to laymen only. In this proceeding they were undoubtedly urged on by the Duke of Lancaster, who aimed at supreme power in the state, and had his own reasons for fearing the influence of so firm and loyal a friend of the Prince of Wales as was the Chancellor Wykeham.

The king's reply to the petition was, "that he would act by advice of his council;" and on the 24th of March the affair terminated by Wykeham's voluntary resignation of the great seal, which was immediately placed in the hands of Sir Robert Thorpe, his predecessor gracefully assisting, not only at the ceremony of his being sworn in before the king, but also at his public installation in Westminster Hall.

It was, in fact, a change of ministers brought about in a moment of national distress, when governments are ready to yield every demand to the clamour of the people. And yet in the end it proved any thing but a popular measure; for though in our day it would certainly be deemed unsuitable for ecclesiastics to fill all the chief offices of state, yet five hundred years ago few of the laity were capable of taking their place; and the removal from office of the only

body of men who possessed the knowledge and talents necessary for the task of government, caused such confusion, that, as we shall see, in the course of a few years the old plan had to be resorted to, and the churchmen were all recalled.

In fact, Wykeham, though removed from the chancellorship, retained his position as a great councillor of state, and the most confidential of the king's advisers. His resignation of office was a gain to himself and to his diocese, whose affairs he was now able to take into his own hands; and whilst the French war was continued with unchanged result, and the campaign of the Duke of Lancaster was terminated in 1374 with a truce, by the terms of which the English may almost be said to have been driven out of France, Wykeham was able to enter on that career in which his true greatness was to be made known to posterity.

But the military defence of the island was at that moment the paramount need. Such was the danger then threatening the kingdom, that even the whole body of the clergy, from sixteen to sixty, were ordered to be arrayed in arms, and made liable to military service; and in 1373, we find an order issued to the Bishop of Winchester to see that his clergy took precautions for the defence of the southern sea-coast against any French descent. A strange measure, as we should now think; but the fighting men of England were across the seas, struggling no longer for conquest, but for the bare holding of their ground.

Whilst the reign of Edward III., so splendid in its beginning, was thus closing in disaster and disgrace, Wykeham, withdrawn from the pressure of political business, at length entered on the active discharge of his pastoral duties. On his first accession to the see, he had found matters in a state of extraordinary confusion, which it needed a patient and business-like hand to unravel. His diocese was sadly depopulated by the late terrible pestilence, and every one of the episcopal houses and buildings presented an appearance of utter dilapidation. Some were ruinous and in decay, and others had actually fallen to the ground. The churches of the diocese were not in much better repair than its episcopal residences, and the rebuilding of the cathedral nave was only just commenced. If the new

Bishop intended to reside among his people, it was quite evident that his first care must be to provide himself with a house to live in; and he did not long leave his intentions on this subject in any doubt, but at once set about the repair of his palaces. The Bishops of Winchester were at that time possessed of a great many parks, warrens, and farms, or granges, as they were called; and they had no fewer than ten castles and manors, in which, according to the custom of the times, they resided by turns, living on the produce of their own estates. So when our readers hear of the draught-horses, sheep, and black cattle, delivered over by the executors of Edington into the hands of his successor, and of certain vexatious disputes held with the said executors concerning farm-stock and dilapidations, they must understand that these were the revenues of a Bishop of the middle ages, who, when he kept open house and lordly hospitality, fed his guests in homely fashion with his own beef and mutton. The accounts were settled between Wykeham and the executors without any action at law; and he now found himself with ample means, in the shape of 127 horses, 1556 head of cattle, and 12,174 sheep and lambs, whose value amounted to about 20,000*l.* of our money. When we understand, however, that in the repairs and new buildings which he subsequently undertook, he expended a sum equivalent, according to the same calculation, to 160,000*l.*, it must be acknowledged that his successors in the see of Winchester had no reason to complain. Neither were his poor tenants suffered to feel that their interests were forgotten by the new Bishop, whose first act was, we are told, the remission of a sum of 500*l.*, due to him by them as customs on his succession to the see.

When we contemplate Wykeham for the first time in the character of a prelate of the Church, we feel that his position was, in many respects, an extraordinary one. He had attained the age of thirty-eight before he had been ordained priest, and had become a Bishop only four years later. He had none of the traditions of the cloister or the college to help him in his new career, and his life hitherto had been one of uninterrupted activity in secular affairs,



the last preparation which appeared likely to fit him for the pastoral charge. Accustomed to think of him only as the acute, intelligent man of business, we are prepared to find his episcopal government marked with much of the same character. We expect to meet with the same diligence and activity that had already raised him from an obscure station, to find him upright and indefatigable in administering the temporal affairs of his diocese and in rectifying abuses ; but at the same time, we may perhaps naturally look for something over-hard and practical in his method of acting, and we are not prepared for those gentle and paternal virtues which adorn the episcopates of so many saintly prelates of the Church.

But the peculiarity of Wykeham's character was its versatility ; he united the most opposite qualities, and followed the most widely different pursuits. It is true, we know but little of the two-and-twenty years which elapsed from his first entrance into the king's service to his elevation to the see of Winchester,—externally they seem to have been spent in absorbing cares ; yet all this time his heart must have been full of the stedfast purpose of devoting himself to the service of God in holy orders ; and in this resolve, formed even before his appointment as surveyor of the public works at Windsor, he persevered in spite of a thousand obstacles, receiving the clerical tonsure in order to put away from him, as it were, something of the secular character, whilst he was still detained by secular engagements.

During all this time he must have led two utterly different lives ; with his hands always full of business, and his time seldom at his own command, he was outwardly living as thousands live around us, who affirm that they have no time for prayer, that devotion is a thing for priests and religious, and perfection almost impossible to be aimed at in the world. Every day we hear it said, that men who labour for their living must be content to save their souls by a bare observance of precepts. And no doubt, as a matter of fact, a busy life in the world does almost invariably dry up within us the source of prayer, and so fill our hearts with thoughts of this world's gain,

that we are often tempted to forget that there is any other world to win or lose. We say that it often does so *as a matter of fact*; but Wykeham's example is one among many which show that this is no *matter of necessity*. God's grace can defend a man from all dangers incident to his peculiar condition of life, and furnish him with the necessary aids to holiness in any state or calling. Wykeham not only remained a religious man in the midst of the world and of the court, but his religion was of a peculiarly devout and tender kind. If the monks of St. Swithin had looked with any degree of jealous mistrust on the courtly prelate who had been sent to minister among them, they must soon have been forced to acknowledge that their own cloister never produced more exalted piety than that which they beheld every day exhibited in the conduct of their Bishop.

We have already spoken of his devotion to the ever-blessed Mother of God; but there was another devotion which was most dearly cherished by Wykeham, and which is an equal indication of the singular *spirituality* of his mind,—we mean, that for the suffering souls in purgatory. It may be safely affirmed that this devotion, so unselfish and unearthly in its tendencies, carrying us beyond the grave, and making us familiar with the secrets of the unseen world, could never find a place in the heart of one who was engrossed by secular cares or the love of money. Its existence in any marked and special degree argues in the soul of its possessor a profound sense of sin, a deep compassion for the sufferings of others, and a habit of dwelling on the thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity. Moreover it is utterly opposed to any thing of that mercenary or commercial spirit which exists among men of the world, who like to see some large practical result even in matters of devotion. We pray, and are sensible of no return; we spend our money in a requiem Mass, and there is nothing but trust in God's word, and God's fidelity, to assure us that the money is not thrown away. Every *De profundis* that we say is as much an act of faith as it is an act of charity; and it has its reward. We do not speak merely of the benefit reaped by the souls of the faithful



departed; but who can measure the effect of this devotion on a man's own soul, bringing him (as it does) into communion with the world of spirits, and realising to him the worth of Christian suffering, and the awful purity of God? Our Catholic ancestors are said to have been distinguished above all other nations for their devotion towards the dead; and it harmonises with one feature in our national character, namely, that gravity and attraction to things of solemn and pathetic interest which, uncontrolled by the influence of faith, degenerates even into melancholy. Wykeham was, in a peculiar manner, susceptible to emotions of this kind: his heart was full of compassion for suffering, and the dead shared his charity with the living. Never did he offer the Holy Sacrifice for the departed without abundant tears. His reverence for the holy mysteries, and the singular devotion with which he celebrated, are often referred to by those who have written his life; one of whom, after speaking of his various charities, thus continues: "Not only did he, as we have said, offer his goods, but also his very self, as a lively sacrifice to God; and hence in the solemn celebration of Mass, and chiefly at that part where there is made a special memorial of the living and the dead, he was wont to shed many tears out of the humility of his heart, reputing himself unworthy, as he was wont to express it in speaking to his secretary, to perform such an office, or to handle the most sublime mysteries of the Church."

Among his charities we accordingly find a great many which were solely directed to the relief of the suffering souls. Wykeham's benevolence had in it one admirable feature: it was not left to be carried out after his death by his executors, but all his great acts of munificence were performed in his own lifetime. One of his first cares, after his accession to the see of Winchester, was to found a chantry in the Priory of Southwyke, near Wykeham, for the repose of the souls of his father, mother, and sister, who were buried within the priory church; and in all his after foundations provisions were made for the continual remembrance of the dead; and (ever grateful to his early friends) King Edward III., the Black Prince, and King Richard II. were

all commended to the charity of those who, as they prayed for Wykeham, were charged at the same time to pray for the souls of his benefactors.

We have said enough perhaps to show that if the new Bishop of Winchester was a man of business, he was not the less a man of prayer: let us now see how he entered on the government of that diocese which he had left twenty years before, with all his fortune to seek or make.

As we have said, his first care was to provide himself with a residence; his next, to let daylight into the confusion in which every thing had been left. Episcopal palaces were not the only things which were falling into decay in the diocese of Winchester; a great many charitable and religious institutions were in almost, if not quite, as ruinous a condition, and demanded as prompt a hand to set them in order. Wykeham's first appearance in his cathedral city spread a secret dismay in the hearts of many evil-doers. Those who, during the lifetime of the late Bishop, had taken advantage of the havoc caused by the dire pestilence which in the years 1349 and 1361 had swept its way through the diocese, to abuse their trusts and appropriate the revenues dedicated to the maintenance of religion, heard with no small discomfiture of the vigorous and energetic style in which the Bishop was said to be taking into his own hands the administration of his diocese. Even his orders to builders and workmen engaged on the repairs of his manor-houses and palaces bespoke the presence among them of a man who would do nothing by halves; and they dreaded lest that keen and searching glance should soon be directed on themselves. In fact, there was a general stir throughout the diocese: the stone-quarries of Quarre Abbey in the Isle of Wight, long disused and forgotten, were again in full operation; they were to furnish the materials for the works, of which the abbot was to be the chief surveyor. Every ecclesiastic in the island was called on to assist, under his directions, with horse and carriage; whilst the Bishop himself bore all the expense. The rebuilding of the cathedral was to be proceeded with without delay; and in all these preparations the clergy of Winchester soon found that they had to deal with one

whose intelligence and experience were only surpassed by his princely munificence of heart. Who could cavil at his wealth, when they witnessed his method of spending it? Every day a certain number of poor were fed and relieved in his palace; and it was whispered that this was but the least part of his charities, for his attendants and friends were charged in secret and private ways to find out those whose modesty would not suffer them to beg, and to relieve them in such a way as not to wound their honest pride. Nay, he loved to distribute his alms with his own hand; and would go about the city unattended, and often unrecognised, seeking out the best objects for his charity. His house was open to all; and if any had felt distrust of the upstart charity-boy whom royal favour had sent back to hold the first rank in his native city, such a feeling could not last; it crumbled to pieces before the frank hospitality with which he entertained his guests, and men were forced to admit that one of noble birth could not have borne his honours in a nobler spirit. Every one had free access to him; and every one left his presence conscious of its peculiar charm. In fact, the grace of simplicity was in all he did and said; not that rough bluntness which often assumes the name, but rather that rare and lovely quality which consists in singleness of purpose and intention, which surpasses in its attractiveness the most courtly external polish, and is the invariable indication of true greatness of mind. Wykeham's address was open and cheerful; his speech, we are specially told, was "free from all evasions;" long as he had lived among politicians, a fearless honesty and truthfulness was the only policy he had adopted as his own. But the greatest marvel remained for those who had been ready to take up Wickliff's sneer against the "kitchen and castle-building clerk." They found him to be, what the Pope's bull had designated him, "a man of letters." His own indefatigable exertions had supplied the place of university studies, and his pliant and versatile mind had acquired a variety of accomplishments which such studies alone would never have bestowed. To men exclusively versed in the scholastic and speculative sciences, there was something fresh and delightful in the

conversation of one whose mind had developed without the restrictions of system, and who had stored up information of all kinds both from books and his own observation. "His skill in architecture," says Dr. Lowth, "seems to have been only one part of that various treasure of useful knowledge which he had laid up for occasional application." The learned found him a man of science; while the devout acknowledged that for prayer, alms-deeds, and an austere and mortified life, he was a worthy successor of St. Birinus and St. Swithin. Casuists and divines found that he had the clearest and promptest method of solving the most intricate cases of conscience: and finally, the common people praised God for giving them a Bishop who Sunday after Sunday gathered them together in the cathedral nave, and taught them the precepts of the Gospel in their own plain English tongue; for Wykeham soon became famous as a sound and eloquent preacher.

In 1373, the Bishop held his first visitation, not only of the secular clergy, but also of all the monasteries and charitable institutions in the diocese; every one of which he visited in person. It may give our readers some idea of what were the provisions for the maintenance of religion in the fourteenth century, if we pass in review some of the institutions then existing in his cathedral city. The Winchester of Wykeham's time, then, was a very different place from that of our day. Its temporal prosperity was just beginning to decline; for Edward III. had destroyed its commerce by removing the wool-markets, or *staples*, as they were called, to his favourite French town of Calais; and thus the Winton merchants were all well-nigh ruined. But the seat of the second bishopric in the kingdom remained a great and noble city even in spite of the destruction of its wool trade: it contained the ashes of the great Alfred, and the relics of more than one sainted king and prelate of the Saxon race; and it contained also their noble institutions of piety. First, there was the cathedral, or "old minster," whose foundation was ascribed by many to Lucius, the first Christian king of Britain. Its monks were of the order of St. Benedict, as were also those who occupied the *new* minster, which stood on the north side

of the city, on the site where a modern bridewell has since been raised, over the graves of Alfred and St. Grimbald. The two communities lived in this close neighbourhood on very brotherly terms; and every year, on Palm Sunday, their ranks mingled together in a procession, whose precise arrangements were agreed on and settled by charter. Leaving the cathedral, with cross and banner borne before them, they passed by the castle on to St. James's church, where they made their first station. Then they came down the Romsey road, and full a hundred voices might be heard joining in the deep-toned chant that rose into the air as they proceeded slowly on through the suburb of St. Valery, where the two bodies separated, the monks of Hyde Abbey (as the new minster was likewise called) returning home, whilst those of St. Swithin's continued the procession down the High Street, and so back to the cathedral.

There was another Benedictine convent for women, founded by the widow of King Alfred, and popularly known by the name of the "Nunna Minster." A little heap of stones, in a garden occupying part of its enclosure, is all that now remains of this celebrated convent, whose last abbess, Dame Elizabeth Shelley, had the wit and spirit to keep at bay the royal plunderer, Henry VIII., for no less than four years; and actually forced him to refund the abbey after its dissolution had been decreed. Compelled to yield at last, her gallant heart never gave up hopes of the return of better days. She refused to leave Winchester; and when she died, bequeathed to the college a silver chalice, the only relic she had saved of the convent treasures, on condition of its being given back to St. Mary's Abbey when the old foundation should be restored.

This was not the only house of religious women in Winchester; in those days, as in our own, there were some who devoted themselves to active works of charity, whilst others led a life of unmixed contemplation; and in the street now called College Street there stood in Wykeham's time a building, styled, in the language of the common people, the "Sustern Spital," or the Sisters' Hospital, where a few religious women were maintained at the sole charge of the monks of St. Swithin's, and consecrated



themselves to the service of the sick poor, whom they received into their house. The sisters lived in the most absolute poverty, and, as we have every reason to believe, in the indefatigable discharge of their duties. Their house seems to have won no small portion of Wykeham's esteem, for we find it one of those specially mentioned in his will; but neither its insignificance, nor the pious charity of its inmates, secured it from the insatiable avarice of Henry VIII.; and the "Sustern Spital" was the first of the religious houses of Winchester which was suppressed at the period of the Reformation.

Besides this, there were other hospitals in the city: one had been founded by a rich citizen, named John Devenish, in the reign of Edward II., on the site of a much more ancient establishment, which had flourished under the rule of the Templars. "St. John's House" was intended "for the relief of sick and lame soldiers, poor pilgrims, and needy wayfaring men." Its chapel, together with its noble hall and cloisters, still ornament the northern side of the High Street; but we need scarcely say, neither chapel nor hospital is any longer applied to its original purpose. The charitable services of St. John's House ceased in the sixteenth century, when even the *poor beds* and squalid furniture for the sick were "confiscated to the royal use"! When Dr. Milner wrote his *History of Winchester*, the head of an image supposed to represent the holy patron was exhibited to curious visitors in the dust-hole. In Wykeham's time it probably stood over the principal entrance, looking into the High Street.

Each of the four mendicant orders had a house in Winchester or its immediate suburbs: that of the Austin Friars stood just outside the South Gate, on the Southampton road; to the east were the Carmelites, also without the walls; but the convents of the Franciscans and Dominicans stood within the city, the latter close to the East Gate, with its gardens stretching down to the banks of the river. Then there was a congregation of regular clergy, called "the Brethren of St. Peter," whose church, dedicated to St. Maurice, still stands, with remains of Saxon architecture to bear witness to its antiquity; and there was the College of St. Eliza-

beth of Hungary, pleasantly situated in the meadows near Wolvesey Palace, and intended for young clerks and students, who were to lead a simple austere life "remote from laymen." The College of the Holy Trinity was endowed as the "carnarie," or charnel-house, of the city; and the chief duties of the priests belonging to the chantry attached to it, were to bury the dead, and keep up perpetual Masses for the souls of the departed.

About a mile from the city, on the beautiful downy hill to which it gave its name, stood the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen, ancient even in the time of Wykeham, who took infinite pains in restoring and reforming it. It is thought to have been founded by Richard Toclyve, a former Bishop of Winchester, in atonement for the part he had taken in the persecution of St. Thomas of Canterbury. It was what we should now call a hospital for incurables, and was under the patronage of the Bishop.

Besides these establishments, there were twenty-seven parish-churches and chapels in Winchester; so that, from the neighbouring heights of St. Giles's or St. Catherine's hills, the city presented a spectacle of marvellous beauty, with its white towers and spires gleaming against the green woods and downs that stretched beyond the walls. Truly these were times when the cities of England bore the impress of the creed of those who reared them; and their streets were filled, not alone with the haunts of traffic or of pleasure, but with many a precious monument of the Christian faith. On the high hill occupied by St. John's Street, the pilgrims to St. Swithin's shrine might then have paused and knelt before the large Calvary erected on that spot, because from its elevation it was visible from most parts of the city; and their road from thence to the minster would have wound past the venerable walls of many a church and hospital, the images of whose patron saints looked down from their fretted niches upon the passers-by; whilst inscriptions met the eye, suggesting at every step some holy invocation, or, it may be, some brief suffrage for the dead.

Nevertheless even holy things are liable to decay and ruin from other causes besides the spoiler's hands; and many



of the religious foundations of Winchester were in urgent need of such a visitor as Wykeham. As we have said, he "actually and personally" visited them all during the course of the year 1373; and the next year he sent his commissioners to correct and reform the abuses which he had discovered. The religious houses of his diocese he subsequently visited again three several times, and in the injunctions which he issued on these occasions he displayed the most accurate knowledge of their various rules and constitutions, the observance of which he every where strictly enforced. Many of these injunctions are still extant; amongst others those addressed to the Priory of Austin Canons at Selborne. They bear evidence both of the extraordinary patience with which he must have investigated the state of the convent, and of his perfect comprehension of the rules of monastic discipline. He specially condemns the neglect in which he found their church and altar, and says that their dirty surplices and uncleaned altar-plate "caused him horror:" indeed, he ever manifested a scrupulous jealousy for the glory of God's house; for, as he observes in these same injunctions, he deemed it preposterous to show in the care of sacred things such neglect of common decency as would disgrace a profane assembly. But little of such reverential respect for holy things could be expected from men who had almost entirely laid aside their religious character, and even their religious dress. Their choir was deserted, and the recitation of the canonical hours neglected. A sporting taste had sprung up among them, if we may judge by the various allusions to their hounds and their attendance at public hunting-matches; and they had exchanged the white serge and surplice enjoined by their rule for "garments edged with costly furs," for fringed gloves, and silken girdles trimmed with gold and silver;" and (*horribile dictu!*) had completed their costume by adding the enormity of certain *boots*, the wearers of which were denounced with great severity, and threatened with imprisonment if the obnoxious boots were not forthwith laid aside. Yet, severe as Wykeham appears in these articles of visitation (and it must be admitted that his severity was not uncalled for), even the hunting canons

of Selborne were forced to own that they had found in him a lenient father and most generous benefactor. To help them in the work of reform, he discharged all the debts which their hunting-matches and costly furs had entailed upon them, to the amount of 110 marks, and a few years before he died he made them a present of another 100 marks; so that altogether they received from his private bounty about 1700*l.* of our money. But neither his severity nor his generosity sufficed to stay the onward course of relaxation; and in the reign of Henry VI., after many unavailing efforts on the part of Bishop Waynflete to introduce a better spirit, the Convent of Selborne was at last dissolved.

But Wykeham's labours at the reformation of Selborne Priory sink into insignificance compared to the herculean task which awaited him in the visitation of the hospital of St. Cross. No charitable institution in England has ever attained to greater celebrity than this, both on account of the munificent spirit in which it was founded, and the abuses and corruptions with which its revenues have been administered down even to our own day. A peculiar interest also attaches to St. Cross from the fact of its being well-nigh the solitary institution of the kind which has survived the period of dissolution and pillage: it stands almost unaltered in external appearance, to show us what were the houses of charity with which our forefathers supplied the want of union workhouses. "The lofty tower," says Dr. Milner, "the retired ambulatory, the separate cells, the common refectory, the venerable church, the black flowing dress and silver cross worn by the inmates, the conventual appellation of *brother* with which they salute one another, the silence and the order which reign here, recall the idea of a monastery." And yet St. Cross never was a monastery; it was but a house for poor infirm men living together in a regular and devout manner; "of which sort," says the same writer, "there was formerly an incredible number in the kingdom." Its conventual aspect results from the fact of its having been founded in days when the monastic spirit was in full vigour, and by men who had deeply imbibed the principles on which

that spirit rests. But during the government of Bishop Edington and some of his predecessors, the mastership of the Hospital had come to be looked on as an ecclesiastical sinecure; the rich revenues were alienated from their charitable purposes, and John d'Edington, the last master, had, on his resignation of his office, carried away with him all the stock, goods, and movable furniture in the house and on the whole estate, leaving dilapidations chargeable to his account estimated at between three and four hundred pounds.

Wykeham was no sooner in possession of his bishopric than he resolved to rectify these abuses. We shall not weary our readers with the steps he took for this purpose; it suffices to say, that they occupied a space of six years, during which time the Bishop's unflinching perseverance pursued the case through all the mazes of commissions and appeals, and finally obtained a complete triumph. When the courts, both of London and Rome, had at length pronounced judgment in his favour, he found himself still burdened with the task of restoring the Hospital from its state of decay to the original object of its institution. Roger Cloune, the master who had resisted his visitation, had imitated the example set him by D'Edington; not only had he seized all the revenues and stock, and sold the corn and cattle, but he had even conceived the idea of pulling down the Hospital itself, and selling the materials, and had actually begun with the demolition of the larder! The hundred poor men daily fed in the great refectory, called the "Hundrede Mennes Halle," had been turned away, and the hall itself had fallen in; even the thirteen poor brethren, for whom the house had been originally founded, were driven out, and forced to shift for themselves.

There was, therefore, plenty of exercise for the munificence of the Bishop; and so perfectly did he accomplish the work of restoration, that when his successor, Cardinal Beaufort, was desirous of disposing of his wealth in some charitable endowment, he preferred enlarging the charities of St. Cross to making any fresh foundation of his own. He therefore added thirty-five to the original thirteen brethren, and provided funds for the maintenance of three

religious sisters to serve the sick in the Hospital;\* giving his new establishment the name of "the Almshouse of Noble Poverty." Wykeham and Beaufort may, indeed, be looked on in the light of second founders; for Beaufort's magnificent endowments would never have been made, had not the Hospital been first brought back to its original perfection through the labours of his predecessor.

Two other hospitals in his diocese were similarly visited by the indefatigable prelate, — that of St. Thomas, Southwark, and one at Sandon in Surrey; but in neither of them did he meet with any resistance to his authority.

In the course of these visitations, the plan which had, as it would seem, long before occurred to him, of making some better provision for the education of the clergy, became more clearly developed to his mind. He had already determined to make God the heir of his wealth, by consecrating it in some way or other to His service; and every day furnished him with fresh grounds of conviction that there could be no charity more greatly needed than the one to which we have referred. It is not to be doubted that the great body of the English clergy were, at the time of which we speak, greatly deficient in the learning which their state required, and, moreover, that the existing means of education were wholly inadequate for supplying their defects. But, whilst granting the fact, it is only candid to state the real cause of those evils, which Protestant writers do not scruple to attribute to the sloth and corruption of the ecclesiastical body.

At the opening of the fourteenth century, every thing had seemed to promise a great revival of literature. "The enthusiasm of learning," says one writer, "seemed to have succeeded to the enthusiasm of the Crusades." Universities sprang up every where with astonishing rapidity, and far exceeded in number those existing in our own day. The age of Dante and Petrarch cannot be branded with the reproach of being illiterate; and the Church of the fourteenth century was rejoicing in that flood of light which her greatest doctor, the angelic St. Thomas, had shed upon

\* The apartments occupied by these hospital-sisters are to this day called "the nuns' rooms."

the science of theology. The schools of the mendicant orders were infusing new life and spirit into every branch of study. It is part of our modern English tradition to represent these orders as only embroiling the universities with their fantastic school disputations; but the name of Roger Bacon of itself might suggest how much they really did to extend the range of studies to many subjects hitherto utterly neglected. It is an undisputed fact, that the revived cultivation of the biblical and oriental languages is mainly attributable to their exertions; and already their labours had been attended with such success, that professorships of Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic had been established at Oxford by authority of Pope Clement V.

And yet, in spite of all this, there was beyond all doubt a great amount of ignorance among the clergy at the close of this century. This fact, however perplexing it may at first sight appear, is easily explained when we consider the circumstances of the times. Not England only, but the whole world, had been exposed to a series of providential visitations such as probably have no parallel in history. The great plague of 1349 had ravaged every part of Christendom, with a fury which renders the accounts handed down to us almost fabulous in their horrors. Whole towns and villages were depopulated, and wild animals roamed through their deserted streets. Immense tracts of country remained without an inhabitant; and in Asia, whence the disease originally proceeded, no less than 35,000,000 men are said to have perished. In England, one-half of the population, and *nine-tenths* of the clergy, were swept away. Five times did the terrible scourge return, each time with redoubled fury; and each time it was followed by famines no less destructive in their effects. The history of every religious institute bears witness to the devoted energy with which the clergy, both secular and regular, devoted themselves to the service of the sufferers, and of the havoc which they sustained in their own ranks. In France and Italy many convents were left without a single survivor, all having fallen martyrs in the cause of charity; so in the hospital of



Sandon, of which we have spoken above, the master and ail the brethren died to a man. In the plague of 1349 the primate of England and seven Bishops were struck down within a few months of one another. Then the parish-churches became deserted, and in most places shut up; for the people feared to congregate in any numbers, and there was often no priest left to minister to them. The universities felt the full fury of the pestilence; a vast number of scholars died, and Oxford was all but abandoned. Early in the century it boasted of 30,000 scholars, and when Wykeham's college was opened their numbers were reduced to 6,000. The schools were closed altogether for a considerable length of time, and the university itself had been reduced so low that it had ceased to be regarded as a place of learning.

The result of these calamities on the ecclesiastical body will readily appear. There existed such a distressing need of men to fulfil the commonest functions of the priesthood, that no great strictness could be observed in their selection. As to choosing men of learning, it would have been a hard matter to find them at a time when the schools and universities were all closed, and when the largest proportion of those who had frequented them had perished. Most of those who presented themselves for holy orders had received no clerical and academical education at all; they were often married men, whose wives had died by pestilence; and doubtless in very many cases Wickliff was not far wrong in representing these "widower clerks," as they were termed, as being somewhat at fault over their Psalter. In like manner, we find the religious orders, alarmed at the threatened extinction of their bodies, admitting all sorts of persons to the habit, without much examination of their call to religion; whence arose that universal relaxation which reached so great a height in the following century. But, however grievous the ignorance and unfitness of the clergy may have been in their consequences, they cannot certainly be chargeable to the corruption of the Church,—they were but the inevitable result of such a crisis as that we have described; and though the ecclesiastical authorities may possibly be blamed as imprudent



in promoting men to sacred offices for which they were wholly unqualified, it is hard to say what may not have been forced on them by the necessity of the times. Most certainly, with the parish-churches closed for want of any to administer the Sacraments, and with nine-tenths of the clergy swept from the land, the literary attainments of the candidates for holy orders could scarcely be much considered: the want of scholarship was a light evil at the moment, when compared with the pressing want of priests; and accordingly we find it is the *ignorance* of the clergy which is the thing most loudly complained of, and represented as a public scandal, so soon as the events which caused it had passed a little from men's minds. In fact, it was clear to the sagacious eye of Wykeham that education at that moment was the truest charity: he might, indeed, have spent his wealth in endowing hospitals and founding monasteries; but until something was done to raise the moral and intellectual standard of those who were to administer these trusts, he could feel no assurance that the money would be well applied. Society had received a shock which threatened to plunge it back into barbarism; and he saw clearly enough that the structure he sought to rear must be commenced from the very foundations. A vast idea gradually unfolded itself to his mind, wherein he contemplated the possibility of creating a system of moral and mental training which should commence its work in childhood, and carry it on through successive stages till it should be perfected in maturer age. The school and the college, governed in the same spirit, and aiming at the same results, already stood before his eye; and year by year he was silently accumulating the materials of his celebrated statutes.

It is evident that his resolution must have been formed very soon after his accession to his see, for within two years from that time he began to make purchases of land in Oxford for the site of the proposed college. But colleges are **not** erected in a day; and foreseeing the length of time which must elapse before the plan could be digested and brought to perfection, and before all the royal patents and papal bulls involved in such foundations could be procured

he determined, in order not to lose time, to begin in an unpretending way, by opening a school at Winchester for the instruction of poor scholars, at his own expense. A house was therefore procured, and a master provided; and in 1373 Richard de Herton opened this school, the nursery of St. Mary's, Winton; having "covenanted diligently for the space of ten years to instruct in grammatical learning as many poor scholars, and no more, as the Bishop should send him." The annual number of scholars thus maintained by Wykeham was no less than seventy.

Meanwhile great changes were passing over the English court; and Wykeham could not watch them with indifference, for death was busy among those who had been his surest friends and patrons. In 1369 he had assisted at the last moments of the good Queen Philippa,—“that excellent lady,” as Froissart calls her, “who had such boundless charity for all mankind. It was a heavy case, and a common,” he says, speaking of her death; “howbeit it was right piteous for the king, his children, and all the realm.” Wykeham received her dying confession, and soothed her passage into eternity; it was a holy Christian deathbed, in harmony with what her life had been. Having comforted the king, and charged him to do justice on all who had any claim upon her, “the good lady,” continues the historian, “made the sign of the Cross upon her breast, and having recommended to God the king and her sons, she gave up her spirit, which I firmly believe was caught by the holy angels and carried up to the glory of heaven; for she had never done any thing by thought or deed that could endanger her losing it.” With her died also the greatness and the fame of Edward III. His bodily frame was worn out by the fatigues he had undergone in his youth, and now the energies of his mind also were giving way. He had the grief, moreover, of seeing his noble son dying by a slow and premature decay, and of knowing that the sceptre he had wielded with so firm a grasp would pass after his death into the holding of a child. Broken down with sorrow and infirmity, he suffered himself during his remaining years to be governed by the menials who surrounded him, and specially by one woman, who had

been in the household of the late queen, and who now exercised unlimited power in the name of the half childish monarch. This person, whose name was Alice Piers, soon became the object of general execration by her infamous transactions. She sold the offices of state to the highest bidder, and no one could stand a chance of obtaining a hearing for his suit who had not first purchased her favour at a sufficiently costly price. There was one man, however, who did not scruple, for his own ends, to pay his court to her; and this was the Duke of Lancaster, who, in the infirm state of both the king and the Prince of Wales, had managed to get the administration of public affairs into his own hands. The popular feeling was, that he aimed at nothing short of the crown, and that he already calculated on the possibility of putting aside the claims of the Black Prince's infant heir. Perhaps the prince himself shared in these suspicions; and this may have had its influence in inducing him to give his support to the opposition which was gradually forming against the duke's government.

In 1376 a parliament assembled, long known in England by the name of the "good parliament." Acting under the countenance of the Prince of Wales, its members proceeded to institute vigorous measures of reform. Petitions were presented to the king, representing the scandals chiefly complained of; and the royal consent having been obtained to the appointment of a council of lords and prelates, they at once boldly impeached all the chief members of the Lancaster government, though, from respect to his rank, they did not venture to attack the duke himself. All his friends and confidants were, however, removed from office; Alice Piers was banished, and a particular statute passed with regard to the interference of women in the courts of law; and all the grave abuses which had so long disgraced the English court were corrected and removed. The chief mover in these measures of reform was Sir Peter de la Mare, the Speaker of the House of Commons, a personal friend of the prince, and a man of great spirit and energy. But it is clear that Wykeham also gave his open and active support to measures which commanded all his sympathy.

He was one of the nine nobles and prelates to whom the government was now committed, and was universally regarded as a close adherent of the popular party.

The career of the "good parliament" was, however, of short duration; it terminated with the life of the Prince of Wales. Sickness and disappointment had cast a gloom over his latter years; and now he lay dying in the palace of Westminster, with Wykeham by his bedside to minister to him in his last hour, as he had done to the queen his mother. Theirs had been a close and true friendship, as we may gather from the peculiar terms in which both the widow and the son of the Black Prince were ever wont to name the services of Wykeham. Edward's thoughts turned in his dying moments upon his son, whom he earnestly desired to see recognised as rightful heir to the crown of England: in this wish the parliament also joined; and when Richard of Bourdeaux, then not ten years old, was led from his father's death-bier to the assembled council of the nation, the commons with one voice petitioned the lords to declare him Prince of Wales, in his father's room, and heir-apparent to the throne. Their desires were ultimately granted; and whilst the great brave heart of the hero of Poitiers was laid to rest beneath the vaulted roof of Canterbury, his boyish heir was solemnly inaugurated Prince of Wales, and at the ensuing Christmas feast was set on the king's right hand, above all the other members of the royal family.

But it was now Lancaster's time to revenge himself for his late disgrace. The funeral of his brother was scarcely over, when he boldly re-assumed the power of which the parliament had stripped him. Alice Piers, also, once more seized possession of the king, who lay sick at Eltham; and soon compelled him to give his assent to every measure suggested by her or by the duke. The whole fury of the latter was directed against those who had been instrumental in his removal from office. Sir Peter de la Mare was arrested and closely imprisoned: with Wykeham it was impossible to act in the same arbitrary manner; and certain feigned accusations were therefore brought against him, charging him with mal-administration of the public revenues. These

charges were put together without the smallest regard to justice; in fact, they disprove themselves by their very enormity. Had Wykeham been guilty of one tenth part of the mal-practices of which he was accused, he would have been the most audacious of public criminals. He had made away with the ransoms of the French and Scottish kings, stripped the state treasury, set at liberty the hostages, and, finally, had been the sole cause of the loss of Ponthieu. Yet, when judgment came to be pronounced, not one of these charges was so much as examined; their absurdity was too manifest even in the eyes of those who had devised them; and, as it has been well observed, an affair which was begun as if millions were at stake, resolved itself into a dispute over 40*l*. A petty transaction in the Court of Hanaper, by which this sum had been refunded out of a certain fine, was declared irregular; and on this pretended ground the Bishop of Winchester was condemned, and writs were issued for seizing the temporalities of his see. At the same time, he was forbidden to approach within twenty miles of the royal court; for Lancaster dreaded to the last the influence of the great prelate over the mind of the king. A fresh parliament was convened, which revoked all the acts of reform passed by the previous assembly; but the memory of the "good parliament" could not so easily be effaced from the minds of the people. They clamoured loudly for the liberation of De la Mare, and for justice to the Bishop of Winchester; and Lancaster saw that his position was by no means a secure one. It was probably with the double motive of intimidating the party of the Bishop, and also of winning the support of the Lollard sectaries, whose numbers and power were considerably on the increase, that he resolved at this juncture to give a marked token of his protection and favour to the arch-heretic Wickliff, who, after being suffered for seventeen years to spread his pestilent doctrines through the country without opposition, was now about to be brought up for examination before the Primate and the Bishop of London. At the same time, in the vain hope of establishing himself in popular favour, he caused a general pardon to be published in the king's name to all accused of any



crime; from which, however, the Bishop of Winchester was carefully excluded, the proclamation declaring, that he, and he alone, should "enjoy nothing of the said graces, grants, and pardons, and in no wise should be comprised within the same."

Meanwhile Wykeham was, perhaps for the first time in his life, passing through the trial of adversity. He bore it as calmly and tranquilly as he had ever borne success. He was forced now to depend on the hospitality of others; for the doors of his own palaces were closed against him, and we find him residing first at the priory of the Austin canons at Merton, and then at the Cistercian abbey of Waverley in Surrey. He had been summoned to re-appear before the council in the January following his condemnation, when fresh inquiries were to be instituted into his conduct. When January came, Wykeham was ready with his defence; but the council of his accusers dared not face him; and a message was sent him that the inquiry was indefinitely postponed. It is needless to add, that it was never proceeded with further.

But together with the parliament, there had likewise assembled the convocation of the clergy; and at their first meeting, their indignation at the unjust persecution of the Bishop was expressed in no measured terms. Courtenay, Bishop of London, undertook to vindicate his cause. He displayed before the eyes of the prelates a huge roll, on which was written the history of Wykeham's injuries, and concluded an eloquent address by moving that no subsidy should be granted till these injuries were redressed, and Wykeham was restored to them to give his vote, together with the other prelates. Sudbury, the Primate, a man of timid disposition, hesitated to sanction this bold measure; but his remonstrances were unheeded, and a petition was drawn up, setting forth the wrongs sustained by the Bishop of Winchester, who had been shut out of many houses in his own diocese, while his temporalities had been unjustly seized, and concluding with a declaration, that the clergy could not proceed to consider the question of the subsidy till full justice had been done to their injured colleague. At first, no answer was vouchsafed to this address; but the



convocation remained inflexible, and the Archbishop found he could get nothing done in the king's business till the Bishop of Winchester had been recalled. A messenger was therefore despatched to Waverley to summon him to take his place among the other prelates; for although, in consequence of his late condemnation, he had received no writ of summons to the parliament, yet he was able to sit in convocation, in virtue of the Archbishop's mandate. He at once set out for London, and proceeded to the chapter-house of St. Paul's, where the prelates were assembled. At his entrance, they all rose with one accord, and received him with extraordinary marks of respect; and he immediately assumed his usual position of weight and influence in the assembly.

But, beyond procuring his presence in the convocation, the remonstrances of the clergy had as yet produced no other effect than that of greatly incensing the Duke of Lancaster, particularly against Courtenay, the originator of the measure. The examination of Wickliff, which was now fixed to take place as soon as parliament should be broken up, offered him an opportunity of evincing his displeasure. We have already had occasion more than once to mention this remarkable man, and a few words may suffice to explain the position he and his followers then occupied in England. He had been born in the same year with Wykeham, but had first drawn on himself the attention of the public in 1360, when he held a divinity professorship at Oxford, and in that capacity raised a violent opposition to the mendicant orders, whose schools were established at the university. His censures were chiefly directed against their life of mendicancy, which he affirmed to be contrary to the law of the Gospel. In the violence of his irritation, he used the coarsest invectives, not only against the friars, but also against the Popes who supported them. Soon after this, having obtained the wardenship of Canterbury Hall by somewhat questionable means, he showed himself no less hostile to the monks than he had been to the friars; and, in defiance of the college charter, expelled the late warden, together with three other monks who held scholarships according to the provision of the statutes. The

matter was referred to Rome, and his conduct being proved illegal, he was deprived of his wardenship; and this decision sowed in his heart the seeds of a deadly animosity to the Holy See. He was now presented to the living of Lutterworth, but continued from time to time to deliver divinity lectures at Oxford. They consisted of little else than bitter invectives against the whole body of the clergy. With singular inconsistency, he, who had at first attracted public notice by denouncing the mendicancy of the friars, now attacked the *beneficed* clergy, and declared all Bishops and ecclesiastics who held any endowments and possessions to be "choked with the tallow of worldly goods, and consequently to be hypocrites and Antichrists." Thus the *friars* had been denounced as living contrary to the laws of the Gospel, because supported by voluntary alms; and the *secular* clergy were now condemned on the opposite grounds of accepting endowments. We find no mention of his commencing the work of reform by resigning his own living of Lutterworth; but, having proved to his own satisfaction that the whole body of beneficed clergy were traitors to God, he went on to show that it was the duty of laymen to refuse the payment of tithes, and forcibly to deprive the clergy of their possessions. He was now at the head of a party; and his followers, whilst still professing themselves the sworn enemies of the friars, affected an exterior which did not greatly differ from theirs. They adopted the title of "poor priests," went barefoot, and loudly professed their resolution to accept of no benefice, and to devote themselves to the work of preaching; a calling they pursued in every diocese, without going through the previous form of applying for the license of the Bishops, often even in direct contradiction to their commands. The sermons of these fanatical men were, as we learn from all contemporary writers, of the most inflammatory description. They appealed to the passions of a rude and ignorant population, and the fruit of their preaching was witnessed in those fearful insurrections of the commons which took place in the following reign. At length the progress of the Lollards, as these new sectaries were termed, attracted the notice of the Pope; and it

was by his orders that Wickliff was now about to appear before the ecclesiastical courts to answer the charges brought against him.

A great crowd assembled in St. Paul's church to witness the trial; but the astonishment of the spectators was universal when they beheld the accused enter the cathedral accompanied by the Duke of Lancaster, and his close partisan Percy, the earl marshal, who cleared the way before him in no very gentle manner. Thus supported, the Lollard chief boldly confronted his judges, and seemed as though he expected to overawe them. The duke haughtily desired that a chair might be brought, and bade Wickliff be seated; but the Bishop of London interfered. It was not becoming, he said, or according to custom, that a priest accused of any misdemeanour should remain seated before his ordinary. Then the smothered wrath of Lancaster broke out into passionate menaces against the courageous prelate who dared thus to oppose his will; and he threatened, if he did not hold his prating, to drag him from the church by the hair of his head. He had sorely miscalculated the temper of his audience; for scarcely had he uttered the words, when they were repeated through the church by a thousand indignant voices, and the multitude with one accord rose in defence of their Bishop. Lancaster beheld the tumult with dismay, for he saw that the tide had turned against him. Hurriedly leaving the church, he with difficulty escaped the violence of the populace, who now gathered in the streets in great numbers; and, marching to the duke's palace of the Savoy, they commenced a furious attack, which would have ended in its total destruction, had not Courtenay himself hastened to the spot and induced them to disperse. Lancaster took refuge at Kennington, in the house of the Princess of Wales, who sent two of her gentlemen to entreat the forbearance of the citizens. "Tell your noble lady," they replied, "that we will do whatsoever she desires; but let the duke know assuredly that we will have a fair trial of Sir Peter de la Mare and the Bishop of Winton."

This riot put a stop for the present to the trial of Wickliff; but it brought a speedy decision to the affairs

of Wykeham. Every one saw plainly enough that it was the defence which Courtenay had offered of his injured colleague which had earned him the enmity of the duke; and Wykeham's cause was at once adopted by the people as their own. We may certainly take this as sufficient proof of his innocence of the charges brought against him; for small as may be the discernment of an angry mob, we will venture to say that a riot in defence of a corrupt state-minister, convicted of plundering the public treasury, is an anomaly unknown in history. The fact was clear to all eyes that Wykeham's real offence had been the part he had so courageously taken in the reformation of abuses in concert with the "good parliament;" and the persecution raised against him by Lancaster did but the more identify the duke's name with those abuses, and increased the universal hatred in which he was held. He soon saw that he should be forced to yield: the people of London, in their honest zeal for the honour of their Bishops, had measured their strength with that of the great duke, and had fairly beaten him. The lay lords of the council, too, now interfered in Wykeham's behalf; and the result was, that on the 18th of June the temporalities of the see of Winchester were restored, on condition of the Bishop's undertaking to fit out certain galleys for the defence of the kingdom; the transaction being accompanied by the private extortion of a considerable sum of money for the benefit of the infamous Alice Piers.

His complete and formal restoration to favour was delayed by the death of the king, which took place only three days afterwards, on the 21st of June 1377; and Wykeham must surely have thought with a heavy heart, that but for these troubles and persecutions he would have been by his dying couch, as he had been by the deathbed of those who had gone before him. But the deathbed of King Edward was a sorrowful and lonely one, far different in all respects from that of his queen; it is one of those scenes which sometimes occur in history, the deep and awful import of which is unfelt by those who have lost the interpretation furnished by the faith. Every Catholic reader, however, knows how desolate a thing it is to hear

of one who has died without the last Sacraments ; yet this was the fate of him who in his lifetime had ranked as the mightiest monarch of Christendom. A dark shadow had rested over his latter years ; and, in a condition of comparative childishness, he had delivered himself over, with whatever of free choice yet remained to him, into the power of that miserable woman, whose evil doings had aroused the indignation of the English commons. Alice Piers had watched alone over his last hours ; we are told she purposely *kept him in ignorance* of his approaching death, lest the intelligence should rouse his dormant faculties, and so her own sordid interests might suffer by any act of penitence or reparation. On the morning of the day which was to be his last, perceiving that his hours were numbered, she drew the jewelled ring from his finger, and left him ; her care of him was ended when there was nothing more to be wrung out of him ; and the dying man was left to struggle through his death agony in sad and utter solitude. She had carefully concealed his danger from the public, and had suffered none of his friends to be admitted to his presence ; and so there was no one left in the palace of Eltham but a few domestics of inferior rank, who, as soon as she had departed, proceeded to strip the deserted rooms of every object of value, whilst not one cared to approach the chamber of the unhappy king. There, we are told, he was at last found by a poor friar, who chanced to be in the palace, and who wandered on through the desolate and empty apartments till he came to that where Edward lay. He was in his agony, yet something of life and sense remained ; and the friar had time to rouse him, and warn him of his danger, and to call on him to prepare to appear before the presence of his Judge : and as he held his rude crucifix towards him, Edward revived, a gleam of light shone in his faded eyeballs, and, stretching out his hands, he raised the crucifix to his lips ; and, pressing the friar's hand in token of his gratitude, he sank back and expired.

Never perhaps had England witnessed such an outburst of enthusiasm as that which accompanied the proclamation of his successor. In the beautiful fair-haired



boy who rode through the streets of London on the day following that which had witnessed the death of Edward, the citizens beheld the son of their favourite hero, and, as they fondly promised themselves, the inheritor of his greatness. His first public act had a graciousness about it; for whilst his grandfather was lying on his deathbed, he had received a deputation from the citizens, and promised to make their peace with the Duke of Lancaster, on the subject of the late riot. London, therefore, received its young king with demonstrations of joy and loyalty, the accounts of which read very much like fairy-tales. The streets through which he passed were spanned with triumphal arches, and ran with wine. In Cheapside a mimic castle was erected, from the towers of which angels descended and offered him golden crowns; others presented him with cups of wine, and as he drank blew towards him fragments of gold-leaf; and amid all the quaint pageants of the day, the merchants of Cheapside were universally allowed to have shown the greatest taste in devising this golden shower.

Three weeks later followed the coronation; and in the long procession which wound its way to Westminster Hall, preceding the blue silk canopy borne aloft on silver spears, and tinkling with silver bells, underneath which walked the young king, the people rejoiced to see the venerable form of their favourite prelate, who appeared in his place during the ceremonies of the day, and at the banquet with which they were concluded. In fact, almost the first act of the new reign was the formal declaration of Wykeham's innocence, and his complete restoration to favour. To satisfy the requirements of the law, this was done in the form of a *pardon*, although the king is expressly made to say in the charter, "We do not think the said Bishop to be in any ways chargeable in the sight of God with any of the matters thus by us pardoned and remitted; but do hold him to be, as to all and every one of them, wholly innocent and guiltless." His past services, and specially his fidelity, both to the king and the Black Prince, are thus warmly acknowledged: "Revolving in our mind the great and notable services performed by the Bishop of Winches-



ter to our royal grandfather, as well as the grave labours undergone by him, and the manifold expenses incurred by him in past times; and the part which the said Bishop took in the affairs of our lord and father, and the special affection and sincere love which the same our lord and father ever bore towards the said Bishop whilst he yet abode in mortal life,—. . . we therefore, for ourselves and our heirs, do totally and in perpetuity exonerate, acquit, and absolve him from all penalties.” Lord Coke says that this pardon is one of the “most large and beneficial” ever granted by letters-patent, and that it is “largely and learnedly penned.” It does not appear quite clear through whose instrumentality it was drawn up; in the charter itself it is declared to have been granted by the advice of the Duke of Lancaster, and of the other lords of council. What Lancaster’s share in the transaction may have been it is not difficult to guess; he probably foresaw that the son of the Black Prince would naturally throw himself on the support of that party which had identified itself with his father’s name, and that his own interest suggested conciliatory measures towards Wykeham, and the other members of the “good parliament;” but it is probable that the influence of the Princess of Wales, who always bore a grateful and affectionate memory of Wykeham’s fidelity to her husband, had some share in procuring for him this “large and beneficial” mark of royal favour.

It is not our purpose to enter at any length on the vexatious history of Richard’s reign. Never were the hopes of a nation doomed to more bitter disappointment; for the accession of the young king was followed by long and ruinous wars, and by domestic factions more ruinous than war itself. During the royal minority, the government of the kingdom was intrusted to a council of regency; whose proceedings, however, gave so little satisfaction, that in 1380 a commission was appointed at the request of parliament for the purpose of undertaking a complete re-adjustment of affairs. Of this commission Wykeham was a member, as well as of almost every other council and administration subsequently formed for a similar purpose. Indeed, the political parties of the day seemed agreed but

in one thing, and that was the trust they put in the Bishop of Winchester. Not a single parliament assembled during the reign of Richard II. without bestowing on him some mark of public confidence, or in one way or other bearing witness to his matchless integrity.

In 1380 broke out that terrible insurrection of the commons, which for a time plunged the country into all the horrors of revolution. It cannot be doubted that the inflammatory preaching of the Lollard sectaries had done much to sow the seeds of discontent among the people. One of the favourite doctrines of Wickliff was, that "the right to property was founded in grace;" in other words, that no man in a state of sin was capable of holding lands, or claiming the services of others; whilst the decision as to who was included in this censure was of course to be left for each individual to settle as might best suit his convenience. There was a certain priest named John Ball, already more than once excommunicated for heretical preaching, and for his gross libels against the Pope and clergy, who took up these fanatical views, and soon became the popular orator of the day. Froissart describes the proceedings of this worthy in his usual graphic style. "He was accustomed," he says, "every Sunday after Mass, as the people were coming out of church, to preach to them in the market-place, and to assemble a crowd about him, to whom he would say, 'My good friends, things cannot go on well in England, nor ever will, till every thing is in common—when there is neither vassal nor lord, and all distinctions are levelled, and when the lords shall be no more masters than we. How ill they have used us! and yet, are we not all descended from Adam and Eve? They are clothed in furs and velvets, and we are forced to wear poor cloth. They have wines and spices and fine bread; and we have nothing but rye, and must needs drink water; and yet it is our labour that enables them to maintain their pomp. We are all slaves, and we have no sovereign who will do us justice.' With such words as these did John Ball harangue the people at his village every Sunday after Mass, for the which he was much beloved by them; and they would murmur to each other as they went to the fields, or from

one village to another, 'John Ball preaches such and such things, and he speaks the truth.' "

The discontent of the people soon broke out into open rebellion; every county, from Kent to the Humber, caught the flame; and the excesses of the insurgents spread universal dismay. "Never," says Froissart, "was a country in such jeopardy as England then was." The chief fury of the tempest was felt in London, whither an immense multitude of the deluded peasantry marched under the direction of their leaders, Tyler and Straw, and, bursting into the Tower, slaughtered the Primate as he had just come from saying Mass. Sudbury probably owed his death to the excessive leniency he had shown towards the fanatic promoter of the insurrection, John Ball, who had several times been brought to trial before him, and whom he had always dismissed with no heavier punishment than a trifling imprisonment. "The Archbishop," says Froissart, "always set him at liberty, for he could not for conscience-sake have put him to death; and the moment he was out of prison he returned to his former errors. But it would have been better if he had been confined for life, or put to death, than that he should have been suffered thus to act." Sudbury's death had something of the character of a martyrdom: when the cries of the mad populace announced to him the fate that awaited him, he refused to fly, and calmly awaited their approach. They rushed into his presence, crying out, "Where is the Archbishop? Where is the thief and the traitor?" He advanced towards them with a tranquil air. "You are welcome, my children," he said; "I am the Archbishop whom you seek, but I am neither thief nor traitor." Then they seized him by his cassock, and dragged him outside the Tower-gates, where, surrounding him, they literally hacked him to pieces; he meekly extending his neck to receive their blows, and praying for them with his last breath.

For two days the streets of the capital were filled with scenes of frightful riot and bloodshed; and in this crisis, we may say that the young king himself was the only man who displayed any courage or presence of mind. To his boldness in meeting the rioters, as well as to the coolness

and moderation he showed in treating with them, the deliverance of the nation may be attributed. But even when the insurrection was quelled, the state of the kingdom remained so disturbed, that we find councils and commissions appointed one after another to inquire into the causes of discontent, and to apply a remedy. Wykeham sat in every one of them, and there is reason to regret that no record has been preserved of the part he took in their debates. That taken by the king was every way remarkable; for it evinces both a goodness of heart and a far-seeing largeness of views for which historians do not usually give him credit. He frankly proposed to parliament the emancipation of the serfs; for it must be remembered, that at the time of which we speak the state of the lower classes of England was one of bondage, and that, whatever may have been the freedom which Magna Charta secured to the barons, it left the people little better than their slaves. But Richard's proposal was any thing but agreeable to his audience; lords and commons burst out in one unanimous and indignant refusal: "Rather would they die," they said, "all in one day." Michelet affirms that this manifestation of the king's political sentiments was never forgotten by the barons, and was the real cause of his ultimate dethronement; "from that day," he says, "Richard was a doomed man."\*

\* Though not immediately connected with our subject, we cannot forbear directing the attention of our readers to another instance of this noble and liberal sympathy with the people displayed on the part of Richard II. It is the more remarkable, because in this case it has no parallel, being the solitary instance on record where the cause of "justice to Ireland" was advocated by an English sovereign in opposition to the whole body of lords and commons. Richard often visited Ireland, and showed a peculiar interest in every thing connected with the state of that unhappy country. On his return from one of these expeditions, he declared to his council his solemn conviction that there would never be an end to the rebellions and distractions of the island, until the rights and privileges of the English law should be extended to the Irish natives as well as to the English who held lands in Ireland. This he, for his part, desired to grant them; but the proposal, like that of giving freedom to the English serfs, was received with scorn and derision. "They would rather forfeit every hide of land," was the answer of the lords of the council; and Richard was forced to yield to their power, though, we are told, he never changed his opinions.

From all we know of Wykeham's line of policy, as well as from the close friendship which united him with the king, and which remained unbroken through the whole of Richard's subsequent disasters, we cannot but feel it more than probable that he at least was found to give his support to a proposal which we may well suppose must have commanded all his sympathies; for, amid the scanty notices left us of Wykeham's acts as a statesman, more than one allusion is made to his efforts to relieve the people's burdens.

Though the king was unable to carry his proposed scheme for the emancipation of the serfs, an opportunity was soon afforded him of at least stopping the frightful effusion of blood which followed the suppression of the insurrection. The executions of the unhappy peasantry who had taken part in the rising were being carried on without any mercy, when the marriage of Richard with Anne of Bohemia, and the subsequent coronation of the young queen, gave him a happy occasion for publishing a general pardon. This grace, which was generally supposed to have been granted at the queen's earnest request, obtained for her, in England, the title of "the good Queen Anne."

Meanwhile the progress of the Lollards was exciting the gravest apprehensions in the minds of the English prelates. Our readers may remember, that the first examination of their leader, Wickliff, had terminated in a popular tumult, and that further proceedings were in consequence suspended for a time. Nevertheless, before the end of the same year, he was again summoned to explain certain propositions selected from his works. Those who profess to see in this man the maintainer of pure primitive Christianity, and the morning star of the English Reformation, would do well really to study his conduct on this occasion. At first he assumed a bold tone, and declared himself ready to shed the last drop of his blood in defence of his doctrines; but no sooner had his trial begun, than his expressions changed. He opened his defence with a profession of entire submission to the authority of the Church, and a revocation of every thing which he might have taught contrary to the truth of Christ. Then follows his explana-



tion of the condemned propositions, which he neither maintains nor abandons, but treats according to a certain system of interpretation (not entirely unknown among heretical bodies in our own day), by which, retaining the words of his previous statements, he contrives, by quibbles, evasions, and the most extravagant distortions of sense, to give them a totally different meaning. Our readers may feel curious to see some specimens of these "non-natural" interpretations of a heretic of the fourteenth century. One of his doctrines was, that no man could hold any civil possessions as a *perpetual inheritance*, and that God Himself could not confer on any one such a right of holding possessions for ever. He now explained that by the words "for ever" he meant after the Day of Judgment, and that, therefore, this doctrine did not affect the present time; although it is notorious that, in the inflammatory sermons he was wont to address to the populace, his whole drift was to do away with all idea of the rights of property, and that the preaching of this doctrine was one main instrument used by the revolutionary leaders to excite the people to insurrection. He also asserted that, "if there was a God, temporal lords might lawfully and meritoriously take away worldly goods from a delinquent Church." The temporal possessions of the Church had, indeed, been the first object of his attack; but now he protested against being thought to teach that temporal lords had of themselves any power to proceed against the Church and seize her property: he only meant that, *if* there were a God, He was almighty and could do all things; and *if* He were almighty, it was possible He might command temporal lords at some time to seize the Church lands; and finally, that *if* He so commanded them, they might meritoriously and lawfully obey.

Our readers will probably agree with the historian\* who remarks that such a course of evasion was unworthy either of a sensible or an honest man. But Wickliff was not honest. Had he been so, two courses were open to him: either to avow his propositions, and abide by his vaunted offer to die in their defence; or sincerely to make that submission to the authority of the Church which, as

\* Lingard.



it proved, was nothing better in his lips than a miserable hypocrisy. But he had not sincerity enough for either of these lines of conduct. He was incapable of submission, whilst at the same time he had no intention of dying as a martyr; and so he was content to escape from the dilemma by a series of clever shifts and contrivances. The Bishops found themselves unable to condemn him, and dismissed him, therefore, with a significant charge to abstain in future from such *ambiguous* language; and Wickliff departed from the court loudly claiming the issue of the trial as a triumph for those very doctrines which it had been his one aim, during his defence, to explain away. We may question the wisdom of this act of leniency on the part of the Bishops, but it may suffice to show how slowly the Church was moved to that severity towards the Lollards which was forced on her at a later period by their own excesses.

Some writers, however, have affirmed that their moderation is rather to be attributed to timidity, and to the influence exerted over them by the court. It is certain that the Princess of Wales did interfere on behalf of Wickliff, to whose opinions she was supposed to lean; and she is said to have induced the Queen, Anne of Bohemia, to obtain his dismissal from her royal consort. Even if this statement be correct, it would be evidently no ground for representing the Bishops as intimidated into mercy; for their fear of the royal displeasure was not powerful enough to restrain them from resuming the proceedings against Wickliff very shortly afterwards, when, as we shall see, they instituted a minute and rigorous examination of all his doctrines. If Queen Anne did really intercede on his behalf, the probability is, that she acted rather from the same benevolence which induced her to undertake the cause of the rioters, than from any sympathy with the teaching of the Lollard chief. There is abundant evidence that Richard himself, when most under the influence of Anne, was strongly opposed to the new opinions. Thus, in his address to the mayor and citizens of London, in 1392, on occasion of a recent riot, he expresses himself in the following terms: "Henceforth avoid offence to your sovereign, and disrespect to his nobles. Preserve the

ancient faith; despise the new doctrines, unknown to your fathers; defend the Catholic Church, the whole Church, for there is no order of men in it that is not dedicated to the service of God." But, we may ask, is there not a strange inconsistency, or, were it not truer to say, a strange malignity, in the way in which heresy represents the action of the Church? When she is forced into severity, there are no words too terrible in which to paint her thirst for heretical blood; but, marvellous to say, her *leniency*, on the other hand, is received only with expressions of contempt: she is cruel when she punishes,—she is cowardly and mean-spirited when she forgives.

It is probable that the explanation of the gentleness with which Wickliff was treated at this trial must be found in the extreme mildness of the primate Sudbury, of whose subsequent death we have already spoken. He was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by Courtenay, Bishop of London, the same who had already taken so decided a part against the new opinions, and who had offered so courageous a defence of Wykeham during the period of his disgrace. Almost his first act on succeeding to the primacy was to call a synod for the purpose of adopting measures for the extinction of this alarming heresy. The events that had occurred since the last trial seemed to demand some more vigorous line of policy; for, let it be observed, Wickliffism was no mere system of opinions, it contained principles of social revolution, and ever acted on the aggressive. During the confusion consequent upon the insurrection of the commons, Wickliff, moreover, had taken occasion to direct his "poor priests," now an organised body acting under his command, to attack the doctrines as well as the discipline of the Church; and four-and-twenty heretical propositions were now selected from his works, and laid before the synod which assembled at the convent of the Blackfriars in London early in the year 1382. At this synod Wykeham attended, and was, next to the Archbishop, the principal person there. After a careful examination by the members of the synod,—*"all of them"* (in the language of Dr. Lowth) *"persons the most eminent for their skill and learning, and their*

soundness in religion,"—these propositions were all condemned; Wickliff then appealed to the protection of the Duke of Lancaster, who, however, rejected his application with contempt; and judgment was pronounced against him, to the effect that he should be suspended from the office of preaching at Oxford, and that all his works should be seized and forwarded to the Archbishop *without erasure or alteration*—a clause rendered necessary by his continual evasions and insincerities. The mandate of suspension was forwarded to Oxford, where it was received with much opposition. Dr. Philip Repingdon, one of the boldest of Wickliff's supporters, even announced his intention of publicly maintaining the condemned propositions in the university pulpit, in which he was supported by the chancellor, Dr. Rygge, who resented the interference of the Archbishop as an attack on the rights of the university. For this the chancellor was himself summoned to appear before the synod, and there humbly made his submission, on which, we are told that Wykeham strenuously interceded for him, and obtained his pardon; for, with his usual far-seeing wisdom, he was averse to all undue severity which could tend to irritate the feelings of the disaffected clergy; thus winning for himself the double merit of zeal in defence of the Catholic doctrines,\* and a willingness to win and conciliate those who opposed themselves to her authority, rather than to drive them into open separation.

Again, we find the clemency of the Catholic prelates attributed by Protestant historians to their fear of the Duke of Lancaster, but with what truth may be gathered from the fact, that the duke had, as we have seen, refused his countenance to the heresiarch, whose two disciples, Repingdon and Hireford, seem to have been so thoroughly persuaded that there was nothing to be expected from court favour to their cause, that, clamorous as had been their former professions, they now, after repeated evasions, publicly recanted, and from that time forth were conspicuous for their rancorous persecution of the opinions they had

\* His name appears next to that of the primate in the signatures appended to the condemnation of the Lollard doctrines.

once held. In fact, the reluctant submission which Wickliff at length made, was forced from him by the duke, who, scandalised at his appeal from a spiritual to a lay tribunal, hastened from Oxford to induce him to discontinue his resistance.\* He accordingly read his confession of the Catholic faith before the assembled prelates, and was then suffered to retire to his rectory of Lutterworth, where he remained unmolested till the day of his death. It took place two years after his condemnation; at the moment of elevating the Sacred Host he was struck with apoplexy, and expired, on the feast of the Holy Innocents, 1384.

Throughout the brief and imperfect notices of Wykeham's share in public events, we have seen him active in the condemnation of heresy, yet foremost in interceding for clemency towards the condemned; indeed, his position amid the contending political parties was eminently that of a peace-maker, although he knew how to rebuke with boldness and severity when occasion needed. Thus, in the year following that which had witnessed the condemnation of Wickliff, a war with Scotland being apprehended, the lords-marchers of the North were ordered by parliament to repair to their respective counties, and there to fortify and garrison their border castles. This was, in fact, the tenure on which they held their lands and dignities; but on this occasion they had the meanness to refuse their

\* Wickliff, in the course of this trial, appealed to the parliament, and presented a petition, in which he was careful to instruct them in the measures necessary for them to take for the safety of the nation. In this document he artfully appeals to that national jealousy of Rome which was ever at work eating out the very sap and life of English Catholicity. Some of his expressions are worth our notice, as examples of the way in which the Lollards were wont to appeal to the sacred writings. He demands that neither the king nor the kingdom shall obey any prelate, *unless this be commanded by Scripture*; and again, that no money be sent either to Rome or Avignon (then the residence of the Pope), or to any foreign court, *unless this duty can be proved and established by Scripture!* A use of biblical authority much in keeping with the representation of his followers in that celebrated petition which they presented to parliament a few years later, in which, among other crimes of the clergy, they set forth their having "permitted men to exercise the trades of the goldsmith and sword-cutler, *which are unnecessary and pernicious under the Gospel dispensation!*"

feudal service, unless they received a share of the subsidy which had been raised on the already over-taxed people for the national defences. These lords-marchers were some of the most powerful nobles of the land; among them was Lancaster's friend and partisan Percy; and when the question came to be debated in parliament, there appeared no small chance of their gaining their point. But Wykeham opposed their petition with firmness and dignity: he was not one to be overborne by rank or influence, when the claim urged was both unjust and oppressive. He reminded them of the fact, that all their wealth and honours had been granted them on the express condition of their yielding their country that service for which they now basely demanded payment; and he drew a forcible contrast between their selfishness and want of patriotism and the chivalry of their brave ancestors. The earl-marshal must have felt a blush of shame mantle on his cheek as he listened to the Bishop's lofty and indignant address. His castle of Warkworth had been granted to his grandfather in the previous reign on this very tenure, and was, in fact, one of the national border defences. Wykeham convinced his hearers; and the lords-marchers, for this time at least, had to raise their forces at their own expense. The political position held by Wykeham in the midst of the various factions which struggled for supremacy during Richard's minority was not a little remarkable. He was a member of administrations formed of parties the most opposite. In 1385 we find him remonstrating with the king for his extravagant demands for additional subsidies; in the following year, when the Duke of Gloucester assumed the chief authority, and formed a grand commission,—a council for the regulation of public affairs,—Wykeham was again named a member of this new government, though, we are told, he was careful to have as little share as possible in the exercise of its powers. The complete neutrality observed by Wykeham at a time when he actually held office under the Gloucester government, is shown by his conduct towards the respective parties. On the one hand, he appears constantly remonstrating with the king for his



follies and extravagance, on the part of his colleagues ; but, on the other, he would have no share in their violent and disloyal acts ; and when all the king's adherents were seized, and either put to death or banished by the duke, in the exercise of his arbitrary and illegal power, and Rushbrooke, Bishop of Chichester, and the king's confessor, was among others banished and deprived of his temporalities, Wykeham fearlessly offered him an asylum in his castle of Wolvesey, and for a considerable time supported him at his own expense.

In the subsequent struggles between Gloucester and the king, Wykeham was one of those appointed to mediate between them, and at the same time to urge on the youthful sovereign the necessity of a retrenchment of his expenses ; yet so little did he forfeit the confidence of the king by thus appearing on the part of the confederates, that when, in 1389, Richard, having attained his majority, succeeded in freeing himself from the bondage in which he had hitherto been kept, and in possessing himself of the supreme power, we find his first act, after displacing all the other partisans of Gloucester from office, was to offer the great seal to Wykeham. Nothing can be a greater proof of the moderation and integrity which thus gained for this remarkable man the trust both of his sovereign and of his countrymen in a period of such fierce dissensions. The Monk of Evesham tells us he did all he could to avoid the acceptance of so responsible an office ; but Richard would take no denial : he desired to have him near his person, and in a manner forced him to remain at the head of affairs ; while he treated all the other members of the Gloucester administration as his political enemies.

The influence of his councils was soon perceivable in the spirit with which Richard began the exercise of his royal power. "He was now his own master," says Lingard ; "and whether it were owing to his wisdom or the wisdom of his ministers, it must be owned that for some years his administration was tranquil and happy." The declaration of the chancellor, in his opening speech to the parliament, seemed likely to be justified, when he said, that "the king, being of full age, was resolved to rule his



subjects in peace, equity, and justice; and that as well Holy Church as the lords and commons of the realm should have and enjoy their due liberties and franchises.' The commons were charged to see to the removal of all things that hindered the execution of the laws and oppressed the people; for that "the king willed that full right and justice should be done to the poor as well as to the rich." So soon as the tranquillity of the kingdom had been assured, Wykeham, with every one of the lately-appointed ministers, resigned their seals of office, and required that all who had any complaint to make against them should declare it to the king in parliament. The answer to this challenge was equivalent to what we should now call a vote of confidence: lords and commons unanimously declared that "all things had been very well done," and that they had deserved the thanks of parliament for their fidelity and good conduct. Hereupon they were restored to their offices, and together with them the king's two uncles, Gloucester and Lancaster, took their seat at the council-table; so that all things seemed to promise a happy restoration of peace and good government; and when the parliament broke up, it was with a public expression of thanks to the king for the zeal he had shown for his people's good.

Wykeham held the great seal but two years. He had accepted it reluctantly; and now, when, as it seemed, the troubles of the king's minority had been forgotten, and his government had been inaugurated amid the blessings of peace and restored unanimity, he again resigned his dignity; and earnestly recommending to the king a continuation of the same moderate policy, he retired to his own diocese; nor do we find him ever afterwards taking any active share in state affairs.

The tranquillity of Richard's reign disappeared with him; fresh dissensions soon broke out between the king and his subjects, and a fierce but brief struggle for power was terminated in 1399 by the deposition of the unhappy monarch. Once only was Wykeham's name brought forward in the course of these troubles; it was in 1397, when Richard, bent on ridding himself of all his enemies, im-

peached for treason the members of the old commission, or council, appointed during the government of the Duke of Gloucester; a most unworthy proceeding, considering that eight years had been suffered to pass over since the period of their holding office. Some of the lords of this commission were beheaded, and others banished; but, in a speech from the throne, Richard declared the Bishop of Winchester, with some other prelates and nobles, excepted from these measures, as being "wholly innocent of the evil intentions of their colleagues."

Wykeham, whose personal loyalty to one whom he regarded as the son and grandson of his two greatest benefactors remained constant and unshaken, could not give his sanction to the violent and illegal acts with which the king now sought to secure his power. The servile parliament which met at Shrewsbury in 1398 was not ashamed to give the sanction of law to all his proceedings. It was chiefly composed of men whose devotion to the royal cause had been gained by sharing among them the estates of the attainted nobles; but the Bishop of Winchester did not sit in that assembly, he sent his procurators to excuse his absence on account of his failing health and many infirmities. He appeared in his place, however, in the last parliament of Richard II. in 1399, and was present when that unhappy monarch solemnly resigned his crown; he likewise attended a few days later, when the lords were assembled in solemn council by command of the new king, Henry of Lancaster; but he would take no part in the vote of the 27th of October, by which the late sovereign was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. On this occasion he even refused to be present; nor did he from that time forth appear in person in any of the parliaments summoned by authority of Henry IV. The only occasion of his joining in any act of the state during that king's reign, was when the sudden apprehension of a Scottish invasion obliged Henry to summon an extraordinary council to furnish him with supplies without application to parliament. The prelates and clergy came forward with noble generosity; and the Bishop of Winchester, who refused his support to the unconstitutional act of his legitimate sovereign, and had absented

himself from every other council and assembly called by the authority of the usurper, gave his hearty and loyal assistance to the government at this crisis, when the safety and honour of his country demanded a sacrifice of all private or party feeling.

From these notices of Wykeham's career as a public minister, we cannot fail to conclude that it must have been marked by an extraordinary consistency and moderation. To be of all parties, and yet of no party; to be associated in almost every public act of one of the most distracted reigns of English history, and yet to thread his way amid all the mazes of state intrigue, following only what he deemed the cause of justice, and the maintenance of peace; to hold himself separated from the rancour and bitterness of the strife around him, and to be honoured and trusted by each successive government,—this surely is the picture of no common statesman. It argues the single eye and stedfast truthfulness of heart which looks to God only in every act of life, and bespeaks that grand and heroic integrity which was the special grace of William of Wykeham. Statesman as he was, the evasions of state policy were unknown to him. His words have been preserved in answer to one who reproached him for not assisting one of his friends in a cause he deemed unjust: "If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of God." Nor, with all his love of peace, would he even withhold a rebuke where it was deserved. When one of the fellows of his own college had preached a sermon glossing over the sins of the times, and, it may be, seeking popularity by something of a sacrifice of truth, he called him into his presence, and sternly reproached him with his human respect: "Mind you not," he said, "that in God's eyes it is assuredly a dreadful sin to praise the wicked, and to speak good of the covetous whom God abhorreth?"

Lowth remarks the fact, so seldom to be recorded of a minister of state, that at the same time that he advanced in royal favour, he grew in the esteem of the people. Indeed, close as was his personal friendship with his royal master, he was preëminently a *popular* minister; "he was ever favourable to, and beloved by, the people of the realm.

and constantly preserved them from subsidies, exactions, and other oppressions.”\* This popularity was augmented by the charm of that singular openness and simplicity of manner which had distinguished him from a child. “His words were never evasive,” says the same writer; “he was easy of access, cheerful and open in conversation, and ready in his answers to all;” “moreover,” he adds, “his actions ever kept pace with his professions.”

We shall now be able to continue the far more interesting narrative of his episcopal career, and to trace the history of those great foundations of charity which have been the principal means of preserving his name for the veneration even of these latter days.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### OUR LADY'S COLLEGES.

WE have already seen that the first steps towards the foundation of his two colleges had been taken by Wykeham very shortly after his accession to his see. The purchases of ground for the building of the Oxford college were begun to be made so early as 1369; and about the same time that his preparatory grammar-school was opened at Winchester, under the mastership of Richard de Herton, a society was formed at Oxford, consisting of a warden and seventy fellows, who were called “The Poor Scholars of the Venerable Lord William, Bishop of Winchester,” for whom he provided lodging and maintenance, giving them rules and directions for their behaviour and course of studies. These preparatory establishments were formed six or seven years before the actual opening of the colleges, whilst the buildings were in course of erection, and the statutes for their government were being leisurely and thoughtfully brought to perfection; an admirable arrangement, by which, to use the words of Dr. Lowth, “the life and soul might be ready to inform and animate the body of his colleges, so soon as they could be finished, that so the whole system might be at once completed in every part.”

\* Ms., Win. Coll.

In 1379, being now in possession of the ground for the site of his Oxford college, he obtained the royal license of foundation, and a Papal bull to the same effect. The charter of foundation was issued in the November of the same year; and in the following March the venerable founder laid the first stone of "St. Marie's College of Winchester, in Oxenford." It is a little curious that this designation has entirely given place to the name of New College, by which it was popularly called at the time; there is also something singular in the title itself. "St. Marie's of Winchester in Oxenford" has a kind of confusion of terms, which, however, points significantly to the devotion of the founder to a locality made sacred to his heart by a thousand early associations. The society was to consist of the warden and seventy fellows, of whom fifty were to study arts or philosophy and divinity, and twenty to be devoted to civil and canon law; besides which, there were to be ten chaplains, three inferior clerks, and sixteen choristers; making up in all a hundred members. But to form an idea of the spirit and design of the founder, we must listen to his own words, in the declaration which he prefixes to his statutes, and which he begins, "In the Name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the Most Glorious Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints of God." In it, after giving thanks to Him who of His goodness has granted to him the abundance of His gifts, he sets forth his purpose of founding these two colleges for poor indigent clerks and students, "to the praise, glory, and honour of His Name, and the exaltation of the Crucified, and for the defence of Mary, His most glorious Mother, for the exaltation of the Christian faith, and for the support of Holy Church, and the divine worship, and the advancement of all liberal arts and sciences."

He refers to the particular exigencies of the Church at that time, saying how sorrowfully he had beheld the decay of the clergy, now reduced to small numbers by pestilences, wars, and other miseries; and, though unable wholly to remedy the evil, had desired in part at least to alleviate it. Then, after providing for the cultivation of various



branches of learning, he ordains that the students in their different faculties shall, from time to time, hold conferences together, "that so the whole body, tending to one end, may be ever of one heart and one soul;" and that, full of divine love and fraternal charity, "they may so sweetly and fervently labour together, that, by the divine help, this our college may ever be provided with men renowned in all sciences, and may securely, firmly, and quietly remain and abide for ever in the beauty of peace." "The annexation of a college to a dependent school," says a recent writer, "the institution of college disputations external to the public exercises of the university, the contemporaneous erection of a private chapel, and the appropriation of fellowships for the encouragement of students in neglected branches of learning, are among the more prominent signs of that which must be regarded more as the creation of a new system than as the revival of a literature in its decline."

The first warden had been chosen out of Merton College; but he resigning before the completion of the college buildings, the Bishop appointed in his room his own kinsman, Nicholas Wykeham. The buildings were finished in six years; and on the 14th of April 1386, being the Saturday before Palm Sunday, the warden and fellows took possession of them, entering in solemn procession, with the cross borne before them, and singing the litanies. These buildings remain substantially entire to the present day; additions have been made, but no material part of Wykeham's work has been destroyed. It is needless to say he was his own architect; and probably the designing of his colleges and their chapels was a most welcome opportunity to him of indulging his favourite taste in the midst of more wearisome engagements. "The architecture of William of Wykeham," says Dr. Ingram, in his description of the college, "is peculiarly his own. Its characteristics are simplicity, elevation, grandeur, and stability. He built, as he always thought and acted, for posterity. His masonry is distinguished for the soundness of its materials, and the judgment displayed in their disposition." So true it is that a man's works will invariably



and undesignedly bear the impress of his own mind ; for this feature of "stability and simplicity" is precisely that most conspicuous in the character of the founder. In fact, the extreme simplicity of the architecture of New College is capable at first sight of awakening a feeling of disappointment : there is a plain modesty about the buildings intended for the use of the students which bespeaks in him who designed them a taste as far as possible removed from ostentation. Every thing like richness of ornament was reserved for the chapel ; and the difference of style observable in these two portions of the college is too distinct and significant to escape the notice of the commonest observer.

Something of that character of symbolism, which was to be found in most of the religious erections of the age, appears in the form of the whole building, which is comprehended within an aureole,—the mystic symbol of perfection. Of its beauty, as it stood during the lifetime of its founder, we can now scarcely judge, from the devastation which it has suffered at various times and from various hands ; principally, however, from those of the celebrated Robert Horne, Protestant Bishop of Winchester in the time of Queen Elizabeth, who was, in virtue of his office, visitor of New College, and in that capacity did his best to earn the title of its destroyer. This man, of whom Wood says, that he was one "who could never abide any ancient monument, acts, or deeds, that gave any light of or to godly religion," had already become notorious for the havoc he had made at Durham, as well as at the college and cathedral of Winchester ; and in his first visitation of the foundation, of which he was the professed official guardian, the records of his devastations afford us the best idea of the architectural riches which the chapel must then have possessed. We read of niches and canopies which were hewn off, and the fretted stonework filled up with plaster and whitewash ; whilst with a ruthless hand he made a wholesale and indiscriminate destruction of images, pictures, stained-glass, and other ornaments. Little did Wykeham dream of the ruin which would be made among all these monuments of his pious munificence by one

claiming to be his successor; he thought only of the chance injuries which might result from the frolics of the junior students when he wrote his sixty-third statute, in which, after enumerating "the image of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, the holy Cross with the image of the Crucified, the image of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and many other images of saints, with a variety of sculptures, windows of ornamental glass, paintings, and abundance of other sumptuous works, to the praise, honour, and glory of God, and of His Holy Mother, all executed with skilful subtlety, and adorned with divers colours," which he had collected and placed in the chapel, he goes on to say, "We, being careful for the safety and preservation of the said images and other works, do strictly prohibit all throwing of stones and balls, or any other things, against the walls, as well as all leaping, wrestling, and other careless and inordinate playing, either in the hall or chapel, by which the aforesaid sculptures, &c. might receive any damage." The ante-chapel still retains the original windows placed there by Wykeham; and among the few images which have escaped destruction are those of our Blessed Lady, with the founder kneeling at her feet, and St. Gabriel in the act of pronouncing the angelic salutation; while within the cloister the Archangel Raphael appears,—another monument of Wykeham's favourite devotion to these blessed spirits.

The members of the college were to live together according to the regulations of the statute. They all dined together in the refectory, where strict silence was preserved while the holy Scriptures were read aloud, and where all kinds of confusion and disturbance were forbidden. Indeed, Wykeham had a particular care that his scholars should cherish good manners as well as learning: he ordains that in their conversation one with another, whether in hall or chapel, cloister or garden, they should address one another in a "modest and courtly manner;" and that, to prevent all unseemly jesting, scandals, quarrels, and excess, "which are commonly indulged after men have dined," so soon as grace had been said, and the loving cup handed round, the seniors should retire from the hall,

taking care that the younger students departed before them. Rational recreation, however, was not forbidden, or rather, it was enjoined. In winter-time a fire was to be lighted in the hall, that "after dinner and supper the scholars and fellows might make honest recreation, reading the chronicles of the kingdom, or poems, or the wonders of the world, or other things not unbefitting the seriousness of their clerical character." Stringent laws were made to restrain all excesses of dress: they were never to put on green, red, or peaked-toed boots, or any of the other fopperies which had been introduced into England by the Bohemian nobles in the train of Queen Anne. Perhaps Wykeham wrote this special anathema against the red and green boots with a lively remembrance of the Austin Canons of Selborne; and a recollection of their sporting propensities and those of the canons of Merton, whose priory he had recently visited, may have prompted him to add a prohibition against "all dogs of chase, hawks, and even ferrets." For offences of this nature the Merton brethren had been sentenced to fast for six successive holidays on "bread and ale."

We have a complete list of the books which Wykeham presented for the use of the students, including sixty-two volumes on theology and philosophy, fifty-two on medicine, fifty-three on canon-law, and thirty-seven on civil law,—no mean commencement of a college-library in those days. After his death he bequeathed to them several other books which he had been accustomed to use, among them his own Bible.\*

\* It is probable that the books mentioned in the following precious morsel of the report of the royal commissioners, in 1535, formed a portion of the ancient library presented by the venerable founder. The visitors were Dr. Richard Leyton and Dr. London; and it is thus they write: "At the seconde tyme we came to New Colege, after we hade declaredde your injunctions, we fownde all the gret Quadrant Court full of the leeves of Duncce" (a Protestant witticism on the name of Duns Scotus), "the wynde blowyng them into evere corner. And there we fownde one Mr. Grenefelde, a gentilman of Bukynghamshire, gatherynge up part of the saide bowke leaves (as he saide), therwith to make hym *sewells* or *blawnsherres* (*i. e.* scarecrows) to keep the dere within the woode, therby to make the better cry with his howndes "

Besides his donation of books, Wykeham supplied the college with many beautiful church-ornaments, some of which are still preserved, and bear the name of the "founder's jewels," though many of those so called were added by later benefactors. From these relics, we may gather some notion of the magnificence with which the celebration of the divine offices must have been anciently accompanied. A pax of silver-gilt may still be seen, set round with pearls, sapphires, rubies, and diamonds, as well as a beautiful jewel which appears to have formed the central ornament of a morse, representing the letter M, the stems studded with precious stones, while in the open compartments appear figures of our Lady and the Angel Gabriel; the whole being emblematic of the Annunciation. We read of no less than fifty copes having been presented to the college by one liberal benefactor, to whom the students were likewise indebted for their chapel-organ. But the most precious relics in their treasury, even before it had been stripped by the hands of puritanical plunderers, were doubtless those which had belonged to the founder himself, and which are still honourably preserved. It speaks volumes for the veneration which attached to Wykeham's memory, when we find that even such men as Horne and Leyton dared not lay their sacrilegious hands on his mitre, crosier, and other pontifical ornaments, though it must have cost them a struggle to spare what they and their fellows were wont to term these "Popish mumming garments." The ground of the mitre is entirely covered with seed pearls, mixed with jewels set in gold, and is also ornamented with emblems of the Annunciation; the pastoral staff is of silver-gilt, studded with enamels, whilst small but exquisitely-wrought tabernacles run story above story, each filled with graceful statuettes of saints. The crook terminates in a kneeling figure, probably representing the bishop himself. Besides, there are the episcopal dalmatics, gloves, and buskins, all bearing witness to the ancient faith and ritual once so dearly cherished in the colleges of our Lady of Winton.

During the building of the Oxford College, the school at Winchester was not forgotten. It was being gradually brought into shape; and the charter of foundation was

issued in 1378, when Thomas de Cranley was appointed first warden. Like its sister society, it was to consist of a hundred members: the warden and ten priests, seventy poor scholars, three chaplains, and three inferior clerks, and sixteen choristers. Harpsfield informs us that, according to the spirit of the age, a symbolical meaning was concealed under these numbers: that the warden and ten priests represented the eleven Apostles; the seventy scholars, with their two masters, the seventy-two disciples; the six clerks of the chapel, the six deacons, Nicholas the seventh deacon being omitted, like Judas, on account of his subsequent apostasy; finally, that the sixteen choristers represented the four greater and twelve minor prophets.

Some years elapsed before Wykeham was able to obtain possession of all the lands he had fixed on for the site of the college. They belonged to different owners; and scarcely had their purchase been completed, when he found himself involved in a vexatious lawsuit; a certain tailor named Devereux serving him with an action of ejectment in consequence of a pretended claim which he made to three acres of the ground in right of his wife. In the course of the suit, the tailor's claim was discovered to be not only groundless, but fraudulent, and he was condemned in costs of 200*l.*; which were immediately defrayed by his generous adversary, who, moreover, finding him some years later reduced to extreme poverty, granted him a pension for his life. There is no doubt that the present college occupies the site of the more ancient school which Wykeham attended in his youth, and that an affectionate remembrance of his own schoolboy-days determined him in the choice of the situation. He did not begin its erection till the Oxford buildings were finished; but in 1387, shortly after the opening of New College, the first stone was laid of Winchester College, which was completed in six years. It was solemnly opened on the 28th of March 1393; when the society, which had been forming under Wykeham's own eyes and directions for twenty years, solemnly took possession of its new house. The school had hitherto occupied lodgings in the parish of St. John Baptist on the Hill; and thence did the procession set forth, with cross and banner



displayed, and the sweet boyish voices intoning the solemn litanies, on that morning, which we will venture to call a memorable one in the annals of England. A great work was begun that day; the foundations were laid of a vast and comprehensive scheme of education, which has been the model and guide for every founder of similar institutions in later times. The union of the University College and its dependent school and nursery was imitated by Henry VI. in his colleges of Eton and King's; by Wolsey in his foundation of Cardinal College\* and Ipswich School; by Sir Thomas White, the founder of St. John's and the Merchant Taylors' School; and even by Queen Elizabeth, who thus connected Christ Church with Westminster School; although the entire plan was never fully carried out, except at Winchester and Eton.

"Wykeham's design," says Dr. Lowth, "was noble, uniform, and complete. It was no less than to provide for the perpetual maintenance and instruction of two hundred scholars, to afford them a liberal support, and to lead them through a perfect course of education,—from the first elements of letters through the whole circle of the sciences, from the lowest class of grammatical learning to the highest degrees in the several faculties." We have already glanced at the foundation at the University; but perhaps the school at Winchester claims even more of our interest and attention. If we are not mistaken, it was the favourite foundation of the venerable father: he calls it, in his statutes, "the origin and source of our college at Oxford, which, like a watered garden, or a vine putting forth its young buds, should provide flowers and fruits of sweet savour in the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, through His grace and favour." "We desire," he says, "that in this our College of Winton may be found the sweet and pleasant milk of the rudiments of science, whereby tender infancy may be nourished; that so, having tasted the sweet honey of these primitive sciences, they may the more easily bear the solid food which shall make them grow to perfect strength; and, advancing to a true understanding of the mysteries of the

\* So Christ Church was styled at the time of its first foundation by Wolsey.



sacred writings, may produce mature and abundant fruit in the holy Church of God."

The buildings of Winchester College are very similar in their general character to those at Oxford; there is the same simplicity, harmony, and grandeur of design. Here, as at New College, on the gateway, and again repeated in more than one canopied niche, still appears the form of her to whose honour Wykeham dedicated his work. The images of the Blessed Virgin which he erected have escaped destruction when almost every other holy statue fell under the iconoclastic fury of the reformers; and this is the more singular, from the fact of their occupying most conspicuous situations: one, representing our Lady with crown and sceptre, and holding the Divine Child in her arms, standing on the outside of the gateway, exposed to the open street, has remained untouched, while the crown and mitre of the two adjoining figures of Edward III. and the founder have been carefully defaced. The middle tower over the interior gate has three beautiful niches, in the centre one of which stands our Lady again, as large as life, with St. Gabriel on the right side, and Wykeham, kneeling as a votary, on the left, dressed in his episcopal vestments. The very same figures are repeated on the south side of this tower; whilst over the east end of the church appears another crowned image of the Queen of Heaven under a gorgeous canopy. Wykeham was determined that his loyal love of Mary should at least be no doubtful question to posterity; and his Protestant biographer has noticed this his special devotion in terms which do credit to his own moderation of feeling. "He seems even in childhood," says Dr. Lowth, "to have chosen the Blessed Virgin as his peculiar patroness, to have placed himself under her protection, and, in a manner, to have dedicated himself to her service; and probably he might ever after consider himself as indebted to her special favour for the various successes with which he was blessed through life. This seems to have been the reason of his dedicating to her his two colleges, and calling them by her name; over all the principal gates of which he has been careful to have himself represented, as her votary, in act of adoration to

the Blessed Virgin, as his and their common guardian." We have noticed at Oxford the images still remaining of St. Gabriel and St. Raphael; here, over the western extremity of the hall, appears the figure of St. Michael, armed with spear and shield, transfixing the old dragon.

The college-buildings had something of a conventual arrangement, in harmony with the rule of life enjoined by the statutes. Whilst yet resident in their lodgings on St. Giles's Hill, the society was obliged by the founder to attend the parish-church of St. John's on every Sunday and festival, and there to assist at matins, vespers, compline, and the hours and Masses of the day, and to take their part in saying and singing the divine office. So soon as they had a chapel of their own, the daily singing of the divine office was ordered to be performed by the fellows and chaplains, "with chant and note." Pitt tells us that all the members of the college assisted at the early matins of our Lady. Seven Masses were commanded to be sung every day,—the first for the Bishop of the diocese, the king, the Catholic Church, the souls of the founder's parents, and of all the faithful departed; the second for the souls of King Edward III., Queen Philippa, the Black Prince, Richard II., Queen Anne, and the founder, with certain benefactors; the third Mass was to be of the day. All were to be sung at the high altar "with note and chant." The grateful love of Wykeham to his royal friends and patrons is evinced in a thousand ways. Besides the Masses for their souls, he seems to have wished to provide means for constantly bringing them to the memory of his scholars: he has introduced their figures into the superb east window of the chapel,—and not theirs only, but those of humbler friends; for there, besides innumerable figures of the saints of the old and new law, we see that of the founder himself, kneeling as usual at the feet of Mary; of Richard II. addressing himself in prayer to St. John the Baptist; of Edward III. adoring the Holy Trinity; and of the glass-painter, stone-mason, clerk of the works, and carpenter, employed on the building,—all at their devotions. In another window was a representation of Wykeham's consecration.

The chapel is approached through a low ambulatory, where the scholars were to say their private prayers between the ringing of the first and second bells; in the ante-chapel the citizens were admitted to assist at the services. The chapel itself is acknowledged by all to be one of Wykeham's masterpieces. The fair tracery of the vaulted roof was an architectural novelty of his own design, which later architects imitated in stone. Two altars formerly stood at the west side of the rood-screen, beside the high altar, and were probably dedicated to our Lady and the Blessed Sacrament. An exquisite stone reredos rose behind the high altar, remains of which peep above the modern wainscot, of a Grecian design, which now runs round the chapel. A tabernacle of solid gold was presented by King Henry VI., with chalices and other vessels of the same material; the stalls were richly carved and crested with tabernacle work. Their place is now filled with common wooden benches, and their remains have been removed into the ante-chapel. A beautiful set of vestments was presented by the founder to the college, the list of which is still preserved, with an immense quantity of gold and silver plate and jewels. Five bells still hang in the tower, which anciently stood over a chantry; but at the Reformation, when chantries were abolished as superstitious, certain alterations were made, which have resulted in something which the symbolising architects of the middle ages would have deemed significant: the tower has been so undermined and weakened, that no one can now venture to ring the bells. It is as though they were reluctant to call men to other offices than those of Holy Church. The refectory and ancient lavatory remain unaltered in form; the former is considered the noblest collegiate hall in England. Here, as at Oxford, the Bible, or some other holy book, was appointed to be read aloud during dinner. As in all Catholic institutes, the grace at dinner included prayers for the dead, which have of course been disused since the Reformation: yet it is singular to find an old Catholic hymn, *Jam Lucis orto sidere*, substituted during Easter-time for the *De profundis*. This hymn is also still sung in procession on the mornings of "breaking up" in the cloisters,

which in old times were wont to echo with the familiar anthems of our Lady; for, if we may judge from the express prohibition against such chants enforced by the commissioners of King Edward VI., the scholars seem to have inherited much of their founder's devotion. "Let the scholars and children," say these reverend visitors, "henceforth omit to sing or say *Stella Cæli*, or *Salve Regina*, or any such-like untrue or superstitious anthem."

Very minute directions are given in the statutes for the internal arrangements of the house: the sleeping apartments were distributed and assigned in obedience to fixed laws; and the strictest regulations were in force for the maintenance not merely of good discipline, but of a gentle and Christian courtesy. Wykeham thought nothing too little to be noticed in order to secure the tone of grave and simple modesty which he desired to see adopted in his colleges. At Oxford he had severely prohibited the rude rough jesting for which the Oxford students of that period had become somewhat notorious; and had bidden them eschew a certain "most vile and horrible game of the shaving of the beard," which was a kind of practical joke wont to be exercised on each newly-made Master of Arts. At Winchester he showed himself equally anxious to preserve among the younger students a feeling of reverence for one another, and to discountenance every thing rude and disorderly. Thus those who dwelt in the upper chambers were forbidden to throw any "chattels" out of the windows, whereby others could be hurt, or any way annoyed. His 44th statute enjoins the golden rule of mutual charity, without respect of person, grade, or condition of life. Every member of the society, after the age of sixteen, was to receive the tonsure; for Wykeham's foundation, it must be always remembered, was primarily intended as an ecclesiastical seminary. How solemn are the terms in which he exhorts them to the courtesy and modesty becoming their state! "We will and ordain, and command it to be firmly observed, and in the bowels of Jesus Christ we beseech also and pray all the fellows and scholars, and all other persons in this college, on their hope to obtain happiness in this life and in life eternal, and on

their fear of the Divine judgments, that in all, and above all, they ever preserve among themselves charity, peace, concord, and brotherly love; and that to this end they avoid all scurrility and angry, contumelious, insulting, injurious, or derisive words, as well as all that are scandalous or offensive; and all comparisons of rank or station, all disputes concerning special rights and prerogatives, and all other things which may excite contention." Modesty, too, was to be observed in their dress; and not only modesty, but frugality. There were to be no "peaked-toed boots" or "knotted hoods," no "pied garments" of many and variegated colours; but grave robes of black or russet, which were expected to remain in use for five years at the least, and to be carefully kept in repair. In fact, Wykeham's ideal of courteous and noble manners included something of that plain and unaffected simplicity which was so admirable in himself. He wished to make his scholars gentlemen, but was far from desiring to see them *fine* gentlemen. He enjoined many of the old monastic customs to be observed; among others, obliging every scholar to sweep his own room, and make his own bed. As late as the sixteenth century, the beds consisted of bundles of straw; so possibly the process of making them was simple enough. However, it is curious to observe that this rule, natural and becoming as it seems to those accustomed to the Catholic standard of good manners, inspired horror and even disgust in the minds of those who had lost the principle of humility on which that standard is based, and had adopted in its room that conventional system which knows not how to distinguish a humiliation from a disgrace. When the Protestant Bishop of Winchester, Sir Jonathan Trelawny, held his visitation of the college in 1708, this custom was the only thing he found to condemn; and condemn it he did, and that not exactly in the *modus curialis* which Wykeham recommended to his boys. He desires that the children be relieved at once "*from the servile and foul office of making their own beds and keeping their chambers clean,*" trusting he may be spared the formality of sending a solemn injunction to that purpose. Such was the difference between the definition of a gentleman in the



fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries. The scholars rose at five; and after performing the obnoxious office of making their straw-beds, they were expected to say their morning-prayers by themselves, consisting of portions selected from the Psalter and Breviary; at half-past five the bell called them to chapel.

It must be remembered, that Wykeham was the first founder of a college in which the chapel formed part of the original design. Some of the Oxford colleges had, indeed, chapels attached to them before the erection of New College; but in no case had this been done at the time of their first foundation, or as any necessary part of the college-system. But in Wykeham's scheme the chapel, and the celebration in it of all the divine offices with special solemnity and splendour, were leading and essential ideas; he deemed that he was providing his students with the material of one half of their spiritual and moral formation when he placed them in those glorious sanctuaries, where they drank in the spirit of Christian faith and Christian worship from every object that met their gaze. The work effected by such influences can never be rightly measured: their action is silent and unperceived, yet, on young and impressible minds, most marvellous. Wykeham had felt their power on his own soul, and rightly estimated their place in any comprehensive system of education, in which the object was not merely the instilling of learning, but the guidance of the entire moral and intellectual nature into "the fullness of the stature of Christ." It would seem that the Winchester scholars did, in fact, imbibe a spirit within the walls of their college-chapel which it was not found very easy to get rid of in days when the reverence inculcated by Wykeham's 30th statute was getting out of fashion. Strype relates a story in connection with the religious changes of the sixteenth century, which appears to show that their sympathies were certainly not on the side of image-breaking. He tells us that in 1535 one Mr. William Ford was usher at Winton College. "There were then," he says, "many golden images in that church, the door whereof was directly over against the usher's chamber. One day Mr. Ford tied a long cord to the images,



linking them all in one; and being in his chamber after midnight, he plucked the cord's end, and at one pull all the golden gods came down. It wakened all men with the rush; they were amazed at the terrible noise, and also dismayed at the grievous sight. The cord being plucked hard, and cut with a twitch, lay at the church-door. At last they fell-to searching; but Mr. Ford, most suspected, was found in his bed. After this Mr. Ford had a dog's life among them; the schoolmaster, fellows, and scholars crying out, and railing at him, by supportation of their master. . . . One night, coming home, he was watched, and when he came to a blind dark corner, they laid on him with their staves." He appears to have escaped, however, with no severer penalty for his sacrilegious freak than a sound cudgelling; but he probably did not again lay his hands on the golden images of St. Mary's, Winton.

Our readers are not to imagine that the Winchester boys of Wykeham's time were expected to eschew all play, because their venerable father set his face so determinately against the *ludos incautos et inordinatos*.\* The cloisters of Winton doubtless witnessed rare sport on Childermas Day, when the ceremonial of the boy-bishop was permitted by statute. Among the college-jewels, we find mention of a copper-gilded cross and staff, for the use of the right reverend prelate; and in the list of expenses are certain entries concerning festivities held on St. Nicholas's Day, and also of payments to the amount of 20*d.* to "divers men coming from Ropley on the feast of Holy Innocents, and dancing and singing in the hall before the scholars." Jugglers, too, and minstrels were sometimes admitted; and "a servant of our lord the king" arrived one memorable January morning with no less a treasure to exhibit before the eyes of the curious little collegians than a live lion! Whole days of glorious freedom in the New Forest were allowed; for the same entries make faithful mention of payments for a certain cart, which took the boys to the wood to behold the deer-hunt, of the wine which was drunk in the forest picnic, and of the substantial supper prepared in the hall against their return.

\* "Rude and reckless playing."

It is remarkable to note the affection with which a Winchester scholar, even in our own day, regards not only his college, but also the memory of its founder. It is his favourite boast that he is a "Wykehamist;" and by this amiable delusion he persuades himself that he is the lawful inheritor of all those good things which Wykeham provided for the rearing up a body of Catholic clergy, for the extension of the Catholic faith, and the defence and enlargement of the Catholic Church. In his daily prayers he is made to "give hearty thanks for William of Wykeham our founder;" though the prayers which the venerable father demanded of all future generations of his sons have long ago been silenced, among the other untrue superstitions of Popery; and he joins in praising God for those benefactors, "by whose benefits we are here brought up in godliness and good learning," when but a glance at the shattered reredos would suffice to remind him that the godliness for which the founder's statutes provided was that which draws its life and being from an altar and a sacrifice which have long since been taken away.

Wykeham's work bore its fruit; and his colleges had not been long founded, before they were acknowledged to take the first rank among all the English learned institutes. One of his own scholars, whom, Dr. Lowth tells us, "he had himself seen educated in both his societies, and had raised under his own eye," was deemed worthy a few years later to be called "the golden candlestick of the English Church, the darling of the people, and the good father of the clergy." This was Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, the founder of All Souls' College at Oxford, and the faithful imitator of Wykeham in his mingled zeal and moderation, his large benevolence, and his noble love of learning.

Of William of Waynflete, the founder of Magdalen College, and the yet more perfect follower of Wykeham in his ecclesiastical character, we purpose presently to speak more at length; and at the same time of one who, though not a "Wykehamist" by education, could lay good claim to the title for the veneration he bore to the great founder, and whose memory deserves to be had in honour, not only because of his noble reproduction of Wykeham's design in

the foundation of Eton and King's College, but because he is the only one of our monarchs who has reigned since the Norman Conquest on whose name there rests any portion of the reputation of sanctity. The reign of Henry VI. was avowedly the most disastrous on record; and his utter incapacity for government, in the midst of those fierce struggles which tore the realm during the period of the civil wars, has made his position in history insignificant, if not contemptible. So at least it is commonly represented; but something of an involuntary veneration attaches to the memory of "Holy Henry;" and there have not been wanting some who, accustomed to study history in the spirit of devout contemplation, have acknowledged among the manifold designs of God, in permitting the awful crisis of the wars of the Roses, the perfecting by suffering of the virtues of "that beneficent, merciful, and saint-like king."

Wykeham's colleges were in his own day regarded with no little curiosity and wonder. Two years after the completion of New College, a great council of state assembled at Oxford; and not one of the nobles and prelates of whom it was formed omitted a visit to the new and splendid foundation of the Bishop of Winchester. Nicholas Wykeham, the warden, entertained them with hospitality worthy of his kinsmanship to the founder, and the rolls of the college bear evidence of the expenses incurred by the visit of "divers lords and their servants" at this time. A little later, John of Gaunt himself, with a stately retinue, visited the college, and was there entertained with "comfits and wine." During Wykeham's lifetime, the college produced several learned and distinguished men, of whose services he made considerable use, and by whom, we are told, he transacted most of his business. He caused several visitations of the society to be held, and once had occasion to address to it a severe censure on the subject of discord and neglect of the statutes. Lollardism appears to have extended something of its baleful influence to the students of New College; in fact, there were few houses in Oxford which were not at one time more or less infected by its doctrines. When Wykeham was reproached with this circumstance by certain jealous courtiers, who charged

him with having raised a seminary of heresy, "God forbid," he replied, with his usual temperance of speech, "that I should expect my little hostel to be happier than the Ark of Noe, which carried a reprobate; or than the House of Abraham, which contained an Ishmael. What am I, that among my hundred scholars there should not be an offender, when a Nicholas was chosen by the Apostles, and in their own company was found a traitor?" It is probable from these words that the number of delinquents was small; and, indeed, when in 1425 a visitation was held of every other college in Oxford, by command of the Primate, "to make search into heretical pravity," New College alone was excepted, which it certainly would not have been had any suspicion then attached to its members.

Wykeham's spirit of active munificence was one not easily exhausted. Scarcely were his colleges completed, when the old man of seventy, young still in vigour of mind and energy of purpose, cast about for some new object on which to spend his wealth and employ his genius. He chose what was in truth to him a labour of love; and possibly, as life drew to a close, he felt a desire to let his last work be the restoration of that sanctuary which had fostered him as a child. The rebuilding of the nave of Winchester Cathedral had been begun by Bishop Edyndon, who lived to see its western front completed. This grand design is attributed to William of Wykeham; but Edyndon's death put an end to all further progress. In 1394, Wykeham having now been Bishop nearly thirty years, found his hands free to continue the works: and on examination the walls and pillars of the old building were found so firm and so little decayed, that he determined to leave them standing, and simply to effect such alterations as his new designs demanded. This was indeed a stupendous undertaking, and the manner in which he carried out his alterations must hand his name down to all posterity as that of a consummate architect. If his taste had been more freely displayed when it produced the chapels of St. Mary's Winton, his ingenuity was certainly more hardly taxed in the work of changing the heavy Anglo-Norman nave to its present noble proportions. This glorious monument of

architectural skill was completed during the episcopate of his successor, a year or two after Wykeham's decease.

Such were the works which occupied Wykeham during his retirement from political life; yet they were far from being all on which his liberality was exercised. He presented no fewer than a hundred sets of vestments, and a hundred and thirteen chalices, to various poor churches, and we are told that "he gave somewhat to every church in his diocese;" the University of Cambridge acknowledges him as a benefactor; and the special benevolence he showed towards the unfortunate members of the alien priories,\* when their lands were seized by the king, is noticed by all his biographers. He gathered them together, and placed them first of all in houses in his own diocese, where he supported them at his own expense; but afterwards procured them a house, with ample revenues, in Paris. Three thousand marks were expended by him in releasing poor debtors; and thrice did he out of his own purse pay the whole of his tenants' share of the parliamentary subsidies. He has been represented as showing no great esteem for the religious orders; and yet we find that the mendicant friars were the constant objects of his bounty; all the old officers of the bishopric, too, he supported and pensioned; and, to use the words of his biographers, "he supported the infirm, he relieved the distressed, he fed the hungry, and clothed the naked."

His scientific talents were constantly employed for the public good; he was not a builder only of churches, but of bridges and causeways; and he went to a vast expense in repairing the roads between London and Winchester, which before his time were well-nigh impassable.

Simple as were his private habits, he could assume the splendour of his high rank with ease and dignity. If the roll of his household expenses tells us in one place of the "liquorice for my lord's drink," and shows us his table furnished on a fast-day with nothing but bread and salt-fish, it gives us elsewhere the minutest details of his

\* Houses or cells dependent on conventual establishments existing in Normandy or other parts of France, the inmates of which were generally foreigners by birth.



princely hospitality. He entertained King Richard more than once at Winchester; we read on one occasion of fishermen being hired from the sea-coast to fish for fifteen days together in the Bishop's ponds for the supply of the royal table. No fewer than 350 nobles and gentlemen were in the retinue of the court; for whose entertainment a "*wagon-load*" of bread, four pipes of wine, and fifteen cart-loads of firewood, were provided; while for carpeting sixteen bundles of green rushes were cut from Charwell Common, and strewn over the floor of the noble hall of Wolvesey. As Prelate of the Order of the Garter, he attended some of the great festivals of St. George, then held every year at Windsor, and appeared in his robes of office. He travelled, too, in princely style, in his own chariot, with relays of horses on the road: but if any reader is rigid enough to take exception at this entry of "twelve chariot-horses" on the household rolls of a Bishop of the middle ages, let him but turn the page and see the daily items of his "alms and oblations," and the sums distributed to the poor on all his journeys.

To the monks of the cathedral he was a benefactor in more ways than one; not only as the rebuilder of their church,—an act which they acknowledged, by an express and formal deed, was on his part wholly gratuitous, "proceeding from his mere liberality and zeal for God's honour,"—but also as having re-established strict and regular discipline among them, drawing up for that purpose a body of statutes every way worthy of his prudence and moderation.

But the time was coming when the infirmities of age and sickness at length made themselves felt. In 1402, we find him obliged to nominate two of the fellows of New College, Dr. Nicholas Wykeham and Dr. John Elmer, as his coadjutors. The Papal bull enabling him to do this had been obtained nine years previously; but Wykeham never used it till compelled by extreme indisposition. He was now unable to hold his ordinations, or to assist at the ceremony of the consecration of the five bells which the king had presented to his chapel at Oxford. He resided during these last years chiefly at South Waltham, near to

that Priory of Southwyke, where lay buried his father, his mother, and his sister. Of this circumstance he was not unmindful; and in these his declining years we find him repairing that church at his own expense, and specially the roof over the vault where his parents lay, the completion of which devolved upon his executors.

When the unfortunate monarch he had so faithfully served yielded his throne to the representative of a new dynasty, Wykeham did not withhold his allegiance from the new sovereign, though no doubt his submission was a painful sacrifice. So great was the veneration attaching to his name, that Henry of Lancaster, far from regarding the adherent of the fallen king with any degree of coldness, gave him special marks of favour; and when about to celebrate his marriage with the Duchess Joanna of Brittany, he chose that the ceremony should be performed in his presence, and in his cathedral-church of Winchester.

Relieved in a great degree from the burden of his episcopal charge, he employed the last year of his life in tranquilly preparing for the great change that awaited him. His will is dated the 24th of July 1403, and shows that, however enfeebled in body, his mind remained sound and vigorous to the last. It is thus he speaks in this document, the imperishable witness of his humble piety and his goodness of heart: "Forasmuch as all that is of time in time decays, and every living being must fail and sink until he come to the last change, which is death, and I know not how long I shall remain nor on which day my Maker may take me, but wait in patience until my last change come; moved by this thought, I, William of Wykeham, by God's permission, though unworthy, the humble minister of the Church of Winchester, not placing my hope in this life, which is a passing vapour, and knowing that I must of necessity soon pass from this vale of misery, though in what day and hour I know not, and desiring to make my last provision before I go to Him that sent me, to the honour of my Creator and of my Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, for the salvation of my soul, and the remission of all my sins,—do make this my last will and testament. First, I recommend my soul to Almighty God, my Creator

and Saviour, who made me out of nothing; humbly beseeching Him of His clemency and great mercy to deign to receive it into the company of His elect." He then proceeds to direct that his body may be laid in the chantry which he had erected for that purpose in the nave of his cathedral, on the spot formerly occupied by the altar whereon the Pekis-mass had been accustomed to be celebrated. It was this circumstance which had determined his choice of its situation; and the ancient altar and image were retained within the chantry up to the period of the Reformation. He desires that, on the day of his burial, "to every poor person coming to Winchester, and asking alms, for the love of God, and for the health of his soul, there should be given fourpence." Alms were likewise to be distributed in every place through which his body was to pass, and large provision was made for Masses and prayers for the repose of his soul. No fewer than 230 bequests, amounting in all to the sum of 7000*l.*, occupy the remainder of the will; most of them are for charitable purposes, and some, like the 200*l.* to be distributed to the poor prisoners of London, and the bequests to his servants, he himself executed by anticipation before his death.

In this will no mention is made of the Masses and offices to be offered in his chantry, because these were regulated by an agreement between him and the prior and monks of St. Swithin's; who, in consideration of his numerous benefactions to the cathedral, and specially for his munificence in rebuilding so large a portion of it at his own expense, agreed that three Masses should be daily offered for him and for his parents and benefactors in his chantry-chapel; the first of which should always be a Mass of our Lady, and should be celebrated at a very early hour; besides which, the boys attached to the convent were, every night for ever, to sing in the said chapel either the *Salve Regina* or the *Ave Regina*, with a *De profundis*. for the repose of his soul.

It was not long before they were called on to commence the performance of this agreement. Wykeham was sinking rapidly; though, faithful to his charge to the last, he continued within four days of his death to transact

the business of his diocese, and to admit all persons who desired to speak with him to his presence, as he lay in his upper chamber. But all saw that the "venerable father" (as he is ever affectionately termed in the chronicles of his college) was soon to be taken from them, to receive the reward of eighty years spent in unbroken acts of charity towards God and man. These last days of Wykeham were passed in almost uninterrupted prayer: and so, as the last hour drew on, we are told that, "taking leave of the world, and looking away from his nearest and dearest friends and kinsfolk, who were standing around him, he lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, and continued with sighs to implore the mercy of his merciful God, and humbly prayed to the Most Holy Trinity,—not as one that was about to die, but as one that was to pass from exile to his home, from death to life, from bondage to glorious freedom,—that he might soon be allowed to depart, and to be with Christ." He expired on the 27th of September 1404, which that year fell on a Saturday, the day consecrated to the honour of Mary, and on which so many of her servants and clients have passed to their eternal crown.

An alabaster tomb was raised over his remains, which were laid before his favourite altar; and there, with the image of his Blessed Patroness looking down upon the place of his rest, the figure of the good and faithful prelate was represented lying as in tranquil slumber. He is in his pontifical robes, with mitre and pastoral staff, his face turned towards heaven, and his hands folded on his breast in prayer. At his head carved angels seem to watch; at his feet are three monks clothed in the habit of St. Benedict; and the images of more than thirty saints formerly occupied those tabernacled niches which were placed around the monument, but which are now empty and defaced. No hand, however, has ventured to injure the figure of Wykeham himself; the features are as perfect as on the first day they were chiselled, and have the tranquil and majestic character which is described as so peculiarly his own. The preservation of this monumental effigy from the fury of the puritanical soldiers under Sir

W. Waller, who in 1642 devastated the rest of the cathedral, literally breaking down the carved work with axes and hammers, is due to the courage and determination of two gentlemen,\* who had formerly been students of Winchester, and who both protected the founder's grave, and prevented the sacrilegious rabble from setting foot within the college-gates. But sacrilege had already done its worst in the preceding century, leaving nothing but the broken foundation-stones of the altar and credence-table to witness against those who had made the daily sacrifice to cease. For three hundred years the "perpetual" Masses have been taken away; and the charity which was so urgently and so touchingly solicited by the great founder is denied him even by the scholars of his own foundation, to whom the inscription, which bids them pray for him and for all who showed him kindness, is nothing now but an antiquarian curiosity.

His own works of charity and munificence make up his fittest epitaph, and have earned for his memory a veneration which attaches to few prelates not honoured by the title of sanctity. A traditional sentiment of respect and love is entertained by those even of opposing creeds for the name of William of Wykeham; and many are ready to repeat in the words of honest John Stow, "Neither do I doubt but that he who thus lived is now with God, whom I beseech to raise up many like Bishops in England."

\* Colonel Fiennes and Mr. Nicholas Love.





## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE A, p. 7.

BROTHER RICHARD PEKES, or Pekis, was a monk of St. Swithin's Priory, and was ordained priest in 1322 by Peter, Bishop of Corbavia, on behalf of Rigaud de Asserio, Bishop of Winchester, and by his special license, he being then absent from his diocese, and in attendance at the Papal court.

### NOTE B, p. 9.

William de Edyndon, the immediate predecessor of William of Wykeham (of whom Dr. Milner speaks, in his *History of Winchester*,\* as "a prelate only inferior to Wykeham himself in his virtues and talents," and says that justice has never been done to his memory), was born of honourable parentage at Edington, a village in Wiltshire, in the diocese of Sarum, and therefore probably received his orders at the hands of the Bishop of that diocese. He was certainly known, and held in good repute, by Adam de Orleton, who had been translated to the see of Winchester, December 1st, 1333, as in the beginning of the year 1335 he collated this William de Edyndon, who was at that time in priest's orders, to the mastership of the hospital of St. Cross, and this preferment was held by him up to the time he was made Bishop of Winchester. In the same year we find Bishop Orleton collating him to the valuable rectory of Cheriton, Hants, which he exchanged a few years afterwards for the rectory of Harting, Sussex, and the prebendship of Allcannings, Wilts, a prebendal stall in the conventual church of St. Marie's Abbey, Winchester; a few months later he exchanged the rectory for the prebendship of Timsbury in the abbey of Romsey. He was a man of unquestionable ability and merits, and stood high in the favour of King Edward III., who, in 1344, appointed him Chancellor of his Exchequer, and shortly afterwards Treasurer of England. On the death of Adam de Orleton, who died at his castle of Farnham, July 18th, 1345, the monks of Winchester Cathedral chose John de Devenishe, one of their own community. The king, however, designed the see for William de Edyndon; and in this wish he found himself forestalled by the Holy See, Pope Clement V. having already fixed upon him for this important bishopric, and to this end had, in the lifetime of the late Bishop, reserved the appointment to

\* Vol. ii, p. 29.

himself *per viam provisionis*. This occasioned some little delay; but he was afterwards duly elected by the monks, and John de Devenishe was, by way of compromise, appointed Prior of Canterbury. On the vigil of Christmas, William de Edyndon received by a special messenger the private bull upon his provision to the see of Winchester; but it was not until the 13th February 1346 that the customary apostolic bulls reached him; and on the 21st of the same month, in virtue of the said bulls, he received from the king the restitution of the temporalities of the bishopric. He was consecrated on Sunday, May 14th, 1346, by John de Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by the Bishops of London and Chichester, in the chapel of the Archbishop's manor at Otford, in Kent.

In 1350, the king appointed him chancellor or prelate of the newly instituted Order of the Garter, an honour which has ever since been held by his successors the Bishops of Winchester. In 1357, he had the Great Seal delivered to him, and became Lord High Chancellor of England. In this difficult post he conducted himself with great discretion.\* On the death of Archbishop Islip, he was elected, on the 10th of May 1366, to the metropolitan and primatial see of Canterbury, which he declined on account of his advanced age, and perhaps also through humility.†

He was distinguished for his numerous works of piety and charity, distributing almost all his unappropriated money amongst the poor during his lifetime;‡ for he had seen his diocese sorely visited by two dreadful plagues, and his beloved children dying by thousands. Little can we realise the frightful havoc occasioned by this terrible scourge, carrying off as it did nine-tenths of the people. "So much misery," says Friar Capgrave, who lived a few years later, "was in the land, that the prosperity which was before was never recovered."§ Our own researches enable us to assert, that it was so great a blow to the religious houses, that up to the period of their suppression they had not recovered from its effects. These sad afflictions laid an overwhelming amount of work upon the shoulders of William de Edyndon, and most zealous and unflinching did he show himself in his laborious office. Exact in the discharge of every duty, he made almost superhuman efforts to alleviate the distress of his own diocese, and did all that he could to console the survivors and inspire them with courage and resignation. Under these circumstances it cannot be matter for wonder that his episcopal palaces were suffered to fall

\* Chronicle. Anonym., Contin. Hist. Winton.

† Harpsfield, Hist. Eccl. s. xiv. c. 19; and Hen. Wharton, Cont. Hist. Wint.

‡ Chron. Anon., Cont. Hist. Wint.

§ Chronicle of England, edit. 1858, p. 213. Capgrave died at his convent at Lynn, of which he was prior, August 12th, 1464, æt. seventy

into dilapidation, though this was not owing to his continual absence from his diocese, as has been asserted by some writers; for, in fact, he visited every part of it, and that more frequently than any of his predecessors.

We have no means of ascertaining the actual havoc occasioned among the religious houses of his diocese, or the number of clergy who perished; but in the hospital of Sandown, in Surrey, there existed not a single survivor; and of other religious houses in the diocese (which comprises only two counties) there perished no fewer than twenty-eight superiors,—abbots, abbesses, and priors,—and nearly 350 rectors and vicars of the several parish-churches. In the churchyard of St. Bartholomew, London, 50,000 dead are recorded to have been buried within twelve months; between Candlemas and Easter nearly 200 interments took place every day. Three Archbishops of Canterbury in one year put on the pallium only to be covered with the shroud; and at Westminster Abbey the abbot and twenty-six of his brethren were committed to one large grave in the southern cloister. Pope Clement wrote both to the King of England and to William de Edyndon to encourage them amidst all this distress, imploring them to place their confidence in Almighty God, and in the prayers of His saints and by processions and prayers to endeavour to propitiate His mercy on behalf of both the living and the dead.

Bishop Edyndon was held in such great esteem by the Holy See that the Papal mandates were almost invariably addressed to him. He delivered the pallium to three Archbishops, viz. of Canterbury, York, and Dublin; consecrated one Archbishop and eight Bishops to the vacant sees in England; and ordained nearly 800 priests. He founded a college for secular priests at his native place of Edington, the beautiful church of which exists to this day; but at the request of the Black Prince, who was a great admirer of the order of hermits, called Bon-hommes, he changed it into a convent of that order. He also founded a chantry of three priests in the chapel of Farnham Castle, and was a benefactor to the college of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, which stood just without the gate of his palace of Wolvesey, Winchester, where the anniversary of his own obit was to be for ever kept; and on the vigil of the feast of St. James the Apostle each year, solemn obsequies were to be celebrated for the repose of the souls of his father and mother, with the office *Salus populi*, and alms were to be distributed to the poor. He built the western front of his cathedral, above the gable of which may still be seen his statue in pontificals, placed beneath a canopy, his right hand uplifted in the act of benediction; and actually began the great work of rebuilding its nave, afterwards so ably carried out by his successor. By his will he ordered

whatever property he left behind to be spent upon this work, and presented to the same church many ornaments and jewels. He was likewise a benefactor to the Benedictine Abbey of Abbotsbury, in Dorsetshire.

Having for twenty years faithfully discharged, almost unaided, the onerous duties of his episcopate, distinguished alike for his charity and his piety, he was, at his palace of Waltham, before the break of day, on the morning of the 8th of October 1366, called to receive his eternal reward. He transacted business up to the 6th of October. His body was brought to Winchester, and buried in the nave of his cathedral-church, within a chantry under the rood-loft, between the pillars on the south side. Here may still be seen his exquisitely carved effigy of alabaster, which, injured and neglected as it is, as a work of art is by far the finest effigy in the cathedral. His high forehead, and calm and thoughtful countenance, cannot fail to attract attention. Around the edge of the tomb runs a Latin inscription in Leonine verse, a testimony of his worth, as will be seen by the following translation :

“ William, born at Edyndon, is here interred.  
 He was a well-beloved prelate ; and Winchester was his see.  
 You who pass by his tomb, remember him in your prayers.  
 He was discreet and mild, yet a match for thousands in knowledge and sagacity.  
 He was a watchful guardian of the English nation ;  
 A tender father of the poor, and a defender of their rights.  
 To one thousand add three hundred and fifty, ten, five, and one,—  
 Then the eighth of October will mark the time when he became a saint.”

#### NOTE C, p. 22.

The name of this Archdeacon of Canterbury was Peter Rogers, who was raised to the purple by Pope Clement VI. on the 29th May 1348 ; and on the decease of Pope Urban V. he was elected to the papal chair, and assumed the name of Gregory. He had resided for several years in England ; and was not only personally known to, but an intimate friend of, William of Wykeham, to whom he sent with the greatest expedition the first tidings of his election ;—an event recorded by Wykeham in the words of the annexed translation : “ In the year of our Lord 1370, in the month of December, died Pope Urban the Fifth, of happy memory ; after whose decease, on the day of St. Thomas the Apostle (Dec. 21st), was elected Pope Gregory the Eleventh, who, *on the feast of St. Thomas the Martyr, late Archbishop of Canterbury*, then nearest following (viz. Dec. 29th), solemnly received the tiara and the full powers of the high apostolical office in the city of Avignon ; and upon whose creation, his apostolical letters were received at Winchester on the vigil of the Epiphany of our Lord (January 5th), by the

reverend father the Lord William de Wykeham, by the grace of God Bishop of Winchester.”

The right of enthroning all the Bishops of the diocese of Winchester belonged to the Archdeacon of Canterbury by ancient custom. The following account of the ceremony of Wykeham's enthronisation is extracted from his Episcopal Register and other documents :

On the ninth day of July, being the sixth Sunday after Pentecost, in the year of our Lord 1368, and the sixth year of the pontificate of his Holiness Pope Urban V., Master William de Askeby, Archdeacon of Northampton, in the church of Lincoln, personally appeared in the cathedral-church of Winchester, clothed in his sacerdotal vestments ; and, proceeding to the great western entrance of the church, he there received in solemn form the reverend father in Christ, the Lord William de Wykeham ; and, accompanied by his attendants, led him a short way up the nave of the church (to the cherished altar of his childhood), where the Bishop knelt down in silent prayer. His devotions finished, he arose ; and was then and there robed in pontifical vestments and other insignia of his rank. His attendants having formed in solemn procession, he was conducted by the said archdeacon along the nave into the choir, to his episcopal seat. In the presence of the notaries and witnesses hereafter mentioned was then publicly read the commission of the venerable master, Raymund Pelgrini, Canon of Anjou, Vicar and Procurator-general in England, of the reverend father in Christ, the Lord Peter, by the title of *Sancta Maria Nova* Cardinal-deacon of the holy Roman Church, and Archdeacon of Canterbury ;\* given under his seal at London on the 12th June 1368, and addressed to the venerable and reverend fathers, the Abbot of Hyde, near Winchester ; the Abbot of Chertsey, Surrey ; Master William de Askeby, Archdeacon of Northampton, in the church of Lincoln ; and Master William de Mulsho, Dean of St. Martin's-le-Grand, London ;—giving them, jointly and separately, full power to perform the enthronisation and installation. This being done, Master William de Askeby, Archdeacon of Northampton aforesaid, inducted and enthroned the reverend father the Lord William, by the grace of God Bishop of Winchester, in his church, and there installed him in his episcopal seat,† and placed him in possession of the said church, with all its rights and privileges, reciting in the Latin tongue the accustomed formula : “ By the authority of Christ Church,

\* He was elected to the papal chair on the decease of Pope Urban V. in 1370, and assumed the name of Gregory, being the eleventh of that name.

† Winchester Cathedral being a conventual church governed by a prior, the Bishop was not entitled to a throne in the church ; therefore, on visiting his cathedral, and in taking part in any grand solemnity, a faldstool was always provided for him ; or, in other words, a temporary throne.



Canterbury, I induct and enthrone thee, the Lord William, the rightly elected, confirmed, and consecrated Bishop of this church, in possession of the same, with all its rights and appurtenances; and may the Lord preserve thy coming in and thy going out, from henceforth, now, and for ever!" The Bishop having sat down, the precentor immediately gave out the chant of the *Te Deum laudamus*, which was joyfully and solemnly sung; and this ended, and the prayer *Exaudi, Domine, preces nostras*, &c. recited, the Bishop forthwith prepared himself to celebrate the High Mass; and, being duly vested, and accompanied by the Lord Prior of Winchester and the Abbot of Hyde as deacon and subdeacon, he proceeded to the high altar. Having celebrated his Mass, he addressed a few brief but feeling words, — almost choked with emotion and mingled feelings, — to the immense multitude of people who crowded on all sides; he gave them his blessing, first in front of the high altar, and then again in front of the rood-loft. Here he paused, and, kneeling down, offered up in the presence of all a prayer for the repose of the soul of his predecessor, William de Edyndon, whose body was lying in the earth close by; and there kneeling, requested that the psalm *De profundis* should be chanted; and having recited the prayer *Fidelium Deus omnium conditor*, &c., he proceeded in solemn procession down the nave; and from the gallery over the portico of its western front, surrounded by his attendants, — the mitred abbots and his own mitred prior, — he gave his blessing to the immense concourse of people assembled without the church, and enabled them all to behold the face of him who was their new Bishop as well as Lord High Chancellor of England, anxious indeed to be endeared to the hearts of all his children. He then ordered the publication (*viva voce*, and by affixing of copies of the same on the church-doors) of the customary indulgence of forty days to all who should confess their sins with sincere repentance, receive the Holy Communion, and visit the cathedral-church, and there pray for his welfare, and God's holy guidance and assistance in the faithful discharge of the onerous duties of the episcopate; and that the blessed and glorious Virgin-Mother of God might never cease to watch over him; together with the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and the holy confessors Saints Swithun, Birinus, Ethelwold, and Hedda, patrons of his church, and all the other saints.

Brothers Hugh de Basyngge, prior of the cathedral-church of Winchester, Thomas Pethy, abbot of the monastery of Hyde, and Robert, abbot of the monastery of Chertsey, and the worthy and noble Sirs John de Clynton, Bernard Brocas, and John de Lisle, knights, and a great multitude of other persons, religious and secular, were personally present, and witnessed all these

things, together with John de Corfe and John de Kelleseye, apostolic notaries public, who had been specially called and desired to attest the same.

The Bishop and the company then proceeded to the enthronisation-feast, held in the great hall of the episcopal palace of Wolvesey; whither the Bishop's marshal, as soon as the Bishop had recited the *secret* of the Mass, had conducted the Archdeacon of Northampton's marshal, and delivered to him the table at the upper end of the hall, on the right hand of the Bishop's table, that he might see it duly prepared, and allotted on this occasion solely to the use of the archdeacon and his guests. On the following day, the archdeacon heard the Mass celebrated by the Bishop in his own chapel; and, having taken leave of the Bishop, and received the accustomed fee for his expenses, departed with all his attendants.

#### NOTE D, p. 84.

A custom is still observed by the scholars of Winchester College which probably dates from the time of its founder. The college, as we have seen, consists of two quadrangles, the south side of the inner one being formed by the college chapel. In crossing this inner quadrangle the scholars always take off their hats, and pass through it bareheaded. Indeed, they are never allowed to appear at all with their heads covered in that quadrangle, or in the cloisters adjoining the chapel. The custom was undoubtedly originally intended as an act of reverence towards the Most Holy Sacrament reserved in the chapel; though it is now very commonly explained as a mark of respect to the founder. It is obvious, however, that there would be no reason for paying such a mark of respect in one part of the building rather than in another; and if ordained by Wykeham himself, we need scarcely say that it must have been intended as a token of reverence to God, and bore no reference to himself, "an ever unworthy minister," as he calls himself.

#### NOTE E, p. 89.

The following list, imperfect as it is, is presented as containing the names of those who received their education at the two colleges founded by William of Wykeham, and who afterwards suffered for their adherence to the Catholic faith in the reigns of Edward VI., Elizabeth, and James I. It will be found to include the Bishop of Winchester, late Warden of Winchester College, the Wardens of Winchester and New Colleges, and the Head-master of Winchester College, as well as other men of high academical rank.

1. Dr. Andrew Borde, M.D., educated at Winchester Col-

lege, who early in life entered the Carthusian Order, but does not appear ever to have been professed. He ultimately became a member of the College of Physicians, and was appointed physician to Henry VIII. He led a life of great austerity, wearing a hair-shirt, and keeping his shroud and burial-sheet hanging at the foot of his bed. On the accession of Edward VI. he was arrested on account of his religion, and died a prisoner for the Catholic faith in the Fleet Prison, April 1549.

2. Dr. John White, D.D., Bishop of Winchester. He was educated at Winchester College and New College, and successively appointed Fellow of New College, Oxford, Vice-chancellor of Oxford, Rector of Cheriton, Hants, Head-master of Winchester College, Warden of Winchester College, and Bishop of Lincoln. On the death of Bishop Gardiner he was translated to the see of Winchester. He preached the funeral sermon over the remains of Queen Mary, December 14th, 1558; and justly extolled her for her virtues and piety. Having refused to take the oath of supremacy under Queen Elizabeth, he was, on the 2d April 1559, in company with the Bishop of Lincoln, sent for the second time a prisoner to the Tower (having been a prisoner there in the reign of Edward VI. for religion and conscience' sake). In the damp cells of his dungeon he contracted a painful ague, but was permitted to retire, when in a dying state, to his sister's house at South Warnborough, Hants: he died a few weeks afterwards, January 12th, 1560. He is recorded to have been a man of blameless life, profoundly learned, an able controversialist, and the most eloquent and gifted preacher of his day. He lived an austere and mortified life, spending most of his time in prayer and meditation. Even Camden, the celebrated Protestant annalist of Queen Elizabeth's reign, has not hesitated to say, "His fame and actions did well answer his name; and so did all men say, how contrary soever to him in religion." His will, indeed, is a testimony of his fidelity and his faith: "My desire is to be buried in my church of Winchester; so that in the last day I may rise with my fathers and my children; I hold their faith; and to God I commit my flock, whom I left when living, and dying I confirm by my death."

3. Henry Cole, D.D., Warden of New College, Archdeacon of Ely, and Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He was deprived, and died a prisoner for the Catholic faith, in December 1579, after twenty years' incarceration.

4. John Boxall, D.D., Warden of Winchester College, Fellow of New College, Dean of Winchester Cathedral, and Registrar of the Order of the Garter. Deprived of all his preferments, and committed, first to the custody of Archbishop Parker at Lambeth, and at last sent a prisoner to the Tower by Queen Elizabeth, on the 8th June 1560, where he continued for many

years, and died in London in the year 1587, in poverty and obscurity.

5. Thomas Hyde, M.A., Head-master of Winchester College, Fellow of New College, and Canon of Winchester. He was obliged to leave the country on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and retired to Douay, where he wrote several theological treatises in defence of the Catholic faith; and he died in that city, May 9th, 1597.

6. James Turbervile, D.D., Bishop of Exeter, Fellow of New College, and a great benefactor to his diocese. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth he was deprived of his see, and committed a prisoner to the Tower, June 18th, 1560.

7. John Body, M.A., Fellow of New College. On being deprived of his fellowship he retired to Douay; but returning to England as a missionary priest was apprehended, and tried at Winchester for denying the queen's supremacy. He was condemned, and executed at Andover, Hants, November 2d, 1583. "Be it known," he said to the multitude who had assembled to see him die, "to all you that are here present, that I suffer death this day because I deny the queen to be the supreme head of the Church of Christ in England."

8. John Mundy, B.C.L., Fellow of New College. He was ejected from his fellowship on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and took refuge on the Continent; but afterwards returning to England as a missionary priest was apprehended, and on the 12th of February 1584 was executed at Tyburn, with four other priests, sufferers for the same cause.

9. Lewis Owen, D.C.L., Fellow of New College. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth he retired to the Continent, and became Regius Professor at Douay, Vicar-General to St. Charles Borromeo, and Chancellor of Milan, and was consecrated Bishop of Cassano in 1588. He died October 14th, 1594, and lies buried in the chapel of the English College at Rome.

10. Alexander Belsier, M.A., Fellow of New College, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and first President of St. John Baptist's College, Oxford. Ejected for refusing the oath of supremacy and his adherence to the Catholic religion.

11. John Harpesfylde, D.D., Fellow of New College, Arch-deacon of London, and Chaplain to Bishop Bonner. On the accession of Elizabeth he was imprisoned for refusing the oath of supremacy, but was permitted some years afterwards to retire to a friend's house in St. Sepulchre's parish, London, where he died in the year 1578.

12. Robert Reynolds, B.C.L., successively appointed Fellow of New College and Fellow of Winchester College, Master of St. Cross Hospital, near Winchester, and Canon of Chichester

and Lincoln. Deprived of all his preferments on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, he died in exile.

13. Giles Gollop, B.D., Fellow of New College, eldest son of Thomas Gollop, Esq., of a noted family in Dorsetshire, and brother to George Gollop, Esq., of Standbridge, Hants. Ejected from his fellowship for refusing the oath of supremacy, he retired to the Continent, and joined the Society of Jesus. He died at the Jesuits' College at Rome, in the year 1579.

14. Thomas Hardyng, M.A., Fellow of New College, Canon of Winchester, Chaplain to Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, and Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth he retired to Louvain, where he died September 16th, 1572, and was buried in the church of St. Gertrude. He was celebrated as an able controversialist, and a strenuous champion of the Catholic faith.

15. Thomas Dorman, M.A., Winchester College, Fellow of All Souls', Oxford. Ejected for refusing the oath of supremacy, he retired to Louvain, and became a priest. He died at Tournay in 1577.

16. John Harpesfelde, D.C.L., Fellow of New College, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, Chancellor of Winchester, and Archdeacon of Canterbury. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth he denied the royal supremacy, and was committed to the Tower, where he died in 1583, after an imprisonment of three-and-twenty years' duration. He was the author of several works; and his portrait is to be seen in the Bodleian Gallery, Oxford.

17. Nicholas Saunders, D.D., Fellow of New College. Imprisoned by Queen Elizabeth for refusing the oath of supremacy; after his release he retired to Louvain, and was appointed Regius Professor of Theology. He accompanied Cardinal Hosius to the Council of Trent, and was afterwards sent by Cardinal Allen on a special mission to Ireland, where he is said to have died of famine. He was the author of several Catholic works.

18. John Rastall, M.A., Fellow of New College. On the accession of Elizabeth he retired to the Continent, and became a member of the Society of Jesus, and afterwards Rector of their College at Ingoldstadt, where he died in the year 1600. He was the author of several works.

19. John Marshall, B.C.L., Fellow of New College. Being deprived on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, he retired to Louvain, and was afterwards appointed a Canon of St. Peter's in Lisle, where he died.

20. Thomas Neile, B.D., Fellow of New College, an eminent Greek and Hebrew scholar, and Chaplain to Bishop Bonner. He was Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of



Oxford, but refusing the oath of supremacy was ejected from his professorship and other preferments, and passed the remainder of his days in poverty and obscurity in the small village of Cassington, near Oxford.

21. John Fenne, M.A., Fellow of New College, Master of Bury St. Edmund's School. Being deprived on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, he retired first to Italy, and afterwards to Louvain, where he was Chaplain to the English Augustinian Nuns, and died December 27th, 1615. He was the author of *Quorundam Vitæ Martyrum Angliæ*. His brother,

22. James Fenne, B.A. of New College, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, was ejected on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and retired to Flanders. Returning to England as a missionary priest, he was apprehended at London, and butchered at Tyburn in company with his fellow collegian John Mundy, February 12th, 1584.

23. Robert Poyntz, M.A., Fellow of New College. On the accession of Elizabeth he was ejected from his preferments, and retired to Louvain. He was the author of some treatises on the Holy Eucharist. The date of his death is unknown.

24. Thomas Stapleton, D.D., Fellow of New College, Canon of Chichester. He retired to Douay on the accession of Elizabeth, and was appointed Canon and Master of the College of St. Amoure, in Louvain; Dean of Hillverbeck, in Brabant; and Professor of Theology at Douay, and afterwards at Louvain, where he died in 1598. He was the author of numerous Catholic works, and translated Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* into English.

25. John Fowler, M.A., Fellow of New College. He fled to the Continent on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, where he wrote several works against the Church of England. He died at Krainburg in Germany, 1578.

26. Richard White, D.D., Fellow of New College, Vicar of Goodhurst, Kent. On the accession of Elizabeth he retired to Louvain, and shortly afterwards to Padua. He was subsequently appointed a Canon of St. Peter's, Douay, Count Palatine of the holy Roman Empire, and Regius Professor of Divinity. He was Rector of the College of Douay during upwards of thirty years, and died in the year 1611. He was nephew to Dr. John White, the last Catholic Bishop of Winchester, of whom we have before made mention.

27. William Rainolds, M.A., Fellow of New College. He visited Rome in the year of the Jubilee, 1575, and was there reconciled to the Church. He was afterwards appointed Professor of Theology and Hebrew at Rheims. He died at Antwerp in the year 1594, and lies buried in the choir of the Béguinage. He wrote several controversial works under the as-

sumed name of William Rosse. It was he who, in the year 1566, received Queen Elizabeth at the gates of New College with an oration, for which he was rewarded with a handsome purse well filled with gold.

28. John Pitts, D.D., educated at Winchester College and at New College. He fled to the Continent in company with Dr. Stapleton. He taught Greek and rhetoric in the English College at Rheims, became Canon of Verdun, and confessor to the Princess Antonia, the wife of the Duke of Cleves, and was afterwards promoted to the Deanery of Liverdune, where he died October 16th, 1616. He was nephew to Dr. Nicholas Saunders, spoken of above, and himself also a distinguished author.

29. Henry Garnet, educated at Winchester College. He retired to the Continent, where he joined the Society of Jesus in 1575, and studied under the celebrated Cardinal Bellarmine; he was afterwards appointed Professor of Hebrew and Mathematics in the Italian College at Rome. He returned to England in 1586, and was appointed Provincial of the English Jesuits, and, on the 3d of May 1606, was barbarously executed before the west door of Old St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Most meekly did he suffer. "This day," said he, "is sacred to the finding of the Holy Cross. Under the protection of this Cross, it has pleased the Divine goodness that I should be brought to this place, and to lay down for its sake my life, and all the crosses of this fleeting and inconstant life. This is, indeed, a great blessing;—a blessing for which it is proper that I should return God unlimited thanks."

30. Thomas Pond, born in 1539, and educated at Winchester College. He was eldest son of William Pond, Esq., and Anne his wife, sister of Thomas Wriotesley, Earl of Southampton. He was one of the greatest and most unflinching sufferers for the Catholic faith, so that even his very enemies felt ashamed of their own cruelty. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1578. In a letter, written to the celebrated Father Parsons, dated June 3d, 1609, glowing with zeal and a religious spirit, he says that he had been confined in ten different prisons during the previous thirty years, and, in that space, had suffered 4000*l.* spoil of his substance. On one occasion, when brought before the court, he says, "Laying my hand upon my cloak" (*i.e.* his Jesuit's cassock), "I protested I would not change it for the queen's crown." Notwithstanding these severe hardships, he attained the good old age of seventy-six, dying March 5th, 1615.

31. Edward Atslow, M.D., elected Fellow of New College in 1554. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth he was ejected from his fellowship for refusing the oath of supremacy. He

afterwards suffered an imprisonment of many years' duration for conscience' sake and his known attachment to the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots.

32. Luke Atslow, M.A., Fellow of New College, and brother to the last named. Ejected from his fellowship for the same cause.

33. Robert Fenne, B.C.L., Fellow of New College, another and elder brother of the martyred priest already mentioned; was deprived of his fellowship and other preferments, on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, for refusing the oath of supremacy.

34. Thomas Darell, M.A., Fellow of New College, a younger son of George Darell, of Calehill, county Kent, esquire, by Mary his wife, daughter of George Whithead, Esq. of Tytherly, Hants. Ejected from his fellowship for the same cause.

35. Richard Shelley, B.A., Fellow of New College, a member of the ancient and distinguished Sussex family of that name, suffered the deprivation of his office from the same cause.

36. John Noble, M.A., Fellow of New College;

37. John Busthard, M.A., Fellow of New College;

38. William Knott, B.D., Fellow of New College;

39. John Ingram, M.A., Fellow of New College;

40. John Catagre, M.A., Fellow of New College;—

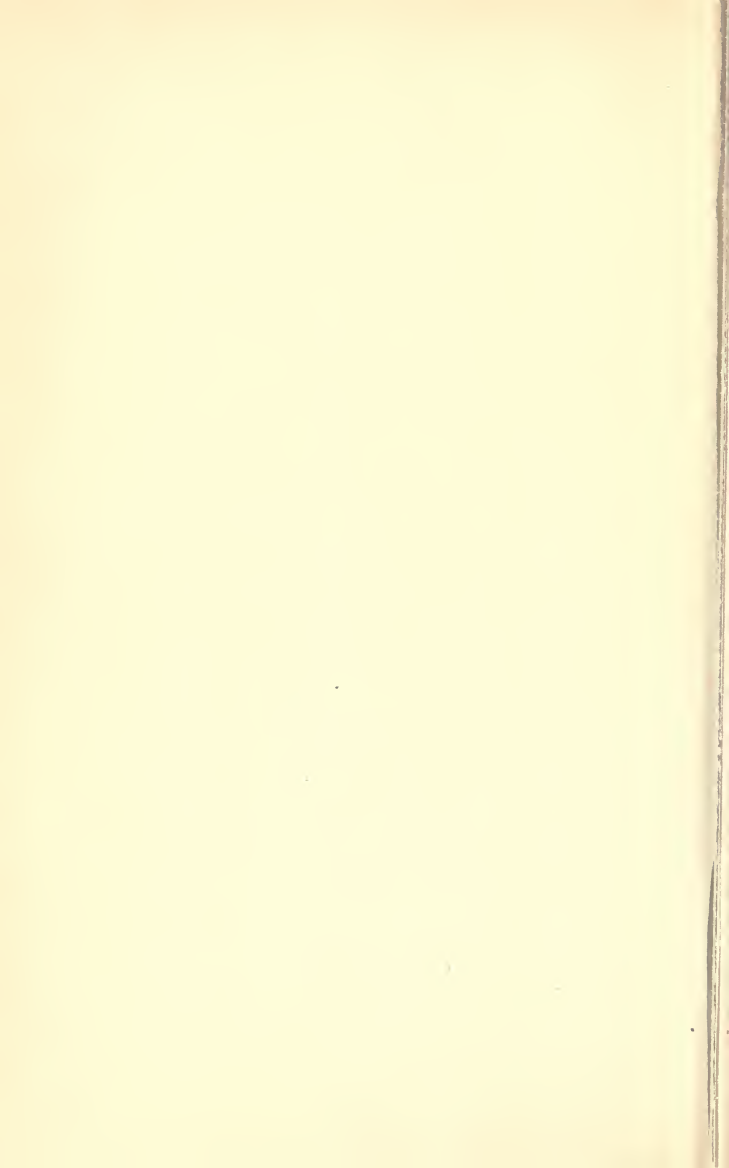
are also known to have been ejected from their fellowships for refusing the oath of supremacy to Queen Elizabeth, besides seven or eight others whose names have not been recorded. Wood, the celebrated Oxford historian, has only given the names of fifteen out of the twenty-three Fellows of New College whom he states to have been deprived of their fellowships, on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, for refusing to acknowledge her the supreme head of the Church.

41. Thomas Gawen, M.A., Fellow of New College, a deep and accomplished scholar, Prebend of Winchester, Rector of Exton, Hants. Lived in exile during the Commonwealth, but returned to his native country with King Charles II., and recovered his ecclesiastical preferments, and an additional appointment to the rich rectory of Bishopstoke, Hants, which he soon relinquished, with all his other preferments, for the Catholic faith, and was subsequently appointed an officer in the household of Queen Henrietta. He died on the 8th March 1684. He was the author of *A brief Explanation of the Cereimonial of the Mass*, *Divers Meditations before and after Communion*, and some treatises.

THE LIFE  
OF  
WILLIAM OF WAYNFLETE



LONDON: BURNS AND OATES LIMITED





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
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# THE LIFE

OF

## WILLIAM OF WAYNFLETE.



### CHAPTER I.

The town of Waynflete. William's birth and parentage. His education at Winchester and Oxford. He is chosen Master of Winchester school and of St. Mary Magdalen's hospital. Character of Henry VI. Love of learning among the English nobles. Henry resolves to found a college. The Eton charter.

THE traveller through the fen districts of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire does not need to be reminded how desolate a country that is which stretches along the western coast between the rivers Ouse and Humber. To one who has ever passed over it, its features remain ineffaceably stamped upon the memory ; the wide flat, broken here and there by patches of water and groups of stunted willows, with nothing to break the long straight line of the horizon save, it may be, one of the tall spires of the Lincolnshire churches. Flocks of geese and wild-ducks, and the cattle feeding on the marshy plains, seem the only living inhabitants of these regions, which yet, strange to say, have a beauty and fascination of their own. Perhaps their broad expanse, checkered by the shadows of the moving clouds, and lit up here and there with pools of sudden sunshine, carry back the thoughts of the traveller to the Roman campagna ; or perhaps the locality itself awakens in his heart memories and associations of the faith : for these fens were once the English Thebaid ; they were peopled by monks and hermits like St. Guthlac, the English Anthony ; and Croyland and Ely and Peterborough were

reckoned in Catholic times among the holy places of the land.

It is to none of these, however, that we are about to carry our readers, but to a dull little market-town which occupies the site of the Roman city of Vainona, and stands a few miles north of the Witham. The creek which runs in from the sea was at one time much larger than we now see it, and when increased by the drainage from the fen waters, formed a haven where ships rode at anchor, and brought considerable trade to the little town of Waynflete. But this was a long time ago, and Waynflete now consists of scarcely more than a single street. As you pass along it, your eye rests, however, on certain tokens that it was not always what it now is. In the market-place is the base and part of the shaft of a ruined cross; and at the south side of the town stands an ancient brick building, half school, half chapel, with remains of painted glass in its windows, and the ancient bell still hanging in one of its towers, bearing the inscription, "✠ Ave . Maria . Gratia . Plena." It is the old grammar-school, which Leland calls the "most notable thing" in Waynflete.

The founder of this grammar-school was a great English prelate. His father, Richard Patten, was a gentleman of Lincolnshire; a merchant, some people will tell you, who gained his wealth by the traffic brought by the "shippelets" of which Leland speaks as coming up to Waynflete haven. But the assertion rests chiefly on the fact that the effigy on his tomb is clad in a gown, which learned antiquaries affirm to have been the dress of merchants in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; whilst those a little more learned prove it to have been likewise the dress of esquires and nobles, nay, even of royalty itself. A few years ago, this tomb might have been seen in the old church of All Saints, on the north-west of the town; but when the church grew dilapidated, the Society of Magdalen College caused it to be removed to their own ante-chapel at Oxford. The full-length figure lies with its hands clasped in an attitude of prayer, its feet resting on a bed of flowering lilies; the features of the countenance are well preserved,—a manly English face, with that calm holy look upon it which is so

remarkable in portraits of the ages of faith; the shoes are peaked, the girdle and purse and knife which hang by the side are what were then considered the ornaments of gentlemen. The tomb itself is of beautiful alabaster, and some years back the old inscription was yet visible: "I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The head of the effigy lies on a pillow supported by two smaller figures, one of a priest, the other of a Bishop; they are the two sons of Richard Patten; and he who bears the delicately-carved mitre and the pastoral staff is William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, the subject of our present sketch.

The exact year of his birth is uncertain, but it must have been very early in the fifteenth century; his mother, Margery Brereton, was daughter to Sir William Brereton, a brave Cheshire knight, who gained no small renown in the French wars, was made governor of Caen in Normandy, and routed a French army at St. Michael's Mount. The two brothers, William and John, appear to have been educated at Wykeham's noble foundations at Winchester and New College. Their great founder was then alive; and we are assured that it was from him that William acquired his first knowledge of architectural science, in which he afterwards excelled so as well-nigh to rival his master. The fact of Waynflete's education at New College has been denied by some; but, as it appears, on no sufficient grounds. In his will he evinces his love of the college by leaving to its members the same sums of money which he had bequeathed to those of his own foundation; and in the frontispiece to Martyn's *Life of Wykeham*, published in 1597, that prelate is represented seated in a chair with his two illustrious sons, Chicheley and Waynflete, on either side of him, each of them presenting him with a picture of their respective colleges. We have no particulars of the school-boy days of the two brothers, except that they were heart and soul devoted to learning. William was not merely learned himself, but whilst still only an Oxford scholar, he did his best to encourage learning in others. It was by his persuasion that his old tutor, John Leilont, principal of Peckwater Inn, published his *Nova Grammatica*; and about



the time of its publication, the young patron of letters was ordained subdeacon in the parish-church of Spalding, and dropping his family name of Patten, assumed that of the place of his birth. This, as we have elsewhere said, was then the custom among ecclesiastics: "it was a fashion in those days," says Holinshed, "from a learned spirituall man to take awaie the father's surname (were it never so worshipfull), and give him for it the name of the towne hee was borne in." His ordination as priest did not take place till some years later; but at length we find in the episcopal register of Lincoln the entry of "William Waynflete, ordained presbyter on the 21st of January 1426." His reputation for learning and piety must even then have been considerable, for only three years later he was chosen by the warden and fellows of Winchester College to fill the important office of master of that school. It was not a very lucrative office; its annual stipend for teaching was ten pounds,\* with a weekly allowance of twelve pence in plentiful years (to be increased when wheat rose to a higher price) for his commons; and a gown of russet cloth at Christmas, to be trimmed with fur and made with a hood, which was not to be sold, pawned, or given away, within five years. Such were the homely provisions of Wykeham's statutes; and our readers may picture to themselves the Oxford student, in his russet-gown "reaching to his heels," introducing the use of his favourite *Nova Grammatica*, and superintending with diligence "the lives and manners" of his scholars during ten happy years of honourable labour.

The little market-town of Waynflete seems to have produced many good scholars and ecclesiastics. The neighbouring abbey of Bardney was presided over at this very time by a certain John of Waynflete, who in 1430 presented the vicarage of Skendleby to one of his townsmen, the similarity of whose name to that of the Bishop has caused some confusion among his biographers. Other William Waynfletes were also presented to other benefices about the same time; but the only piece of preferment enjoyed by the master of Winchester School was the mastership and chantry of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen, situ-

\* About 100*l.* of our present money.

ated about a mile east of the city, to which he was presented, about the year 1438, by the great Cardinal Beaufort, who then filled the see of Winchester. The hospital had formerly been a hospital of lepers, and was one of those almost innumerable institutions which in Catholic times lay scattered over the length and breadth of England: pious foundations of charity for the living and the dead, whose endowments went to the support of a certain number of poor brethren, and were administered by a priest, who also served the chantry. His new preferment, besides adding the sum of nine pounds twelve shillings to his annual revenue, seems to have had its influence over the future life of Waynflete: he chose St. Mary Magdalen for his patron saint; and in after years, when he had become the founder of one of the noblest of English colleges, his heart turned back to his humble chantry, and he bestowed on his Oxford foundation the title of the poor Hospital of Lepers.

Waynflete's merits were now fast attracting the notice of some of those great scholars who had been formed in Wykeham's school. Among them was Thomas Beckington, then a fellow of New College, who had filled the office of tutor to the young king, and enjoyed a large share of his confidence. Wykeham had been his first patron; and he seemed to have inherited no small share of his master's spirit. He had all the largeness of soul, the boundless munificence, and the love of learning, which distinguished that great man; and together with these qualities he possessed also a singular readiness in detecting and rewarding merit. "It was," says Chaundler,\* the Chancellor of Oxford, and the biographer of both the great founders, "by

\* To avoid confusion, we may remind our readers that Waynflete has had *two* biographers of very similar names: Dr Thomas Chaundler, his own bosom friend, who filled the office of chancellor to Bishop Beckington, and was afterwards chancellor of the University of Oxford; and Dr. Richard Chandler, a fellow of Magdalen and a noted antiquary, whose life of Waynflete, written during the latter part of the last century, is gathered from the earlier writings of Chaundler, Budden, and Heylin. Chandler was a Protestant divine, of which his work bears ample testimony; yet his remarks on the character of Wolsey are written with singular impartiality, and successfully vindicate that great man from some of the charges most popularly brought against him.

the means of this most beneficent prelate, that Waynflete, springing up like a flourishing stem from the root of Wykeham's foundation, increased, as it were, unto a mighty cedar, and, as a tree planted by the waterside, brought forth fruit in abundance." Beckington was in fact at that time a man of influence at court; the throne of the fifth Harry was filled by his holy, mild, and studious son, who cared a great deal more for the success of his learned foundations than for the loss or gain of his French dominions, and in whose eyes the poor habit of an Oxford scholar found far more favour than the knightly helm and hauberk. His life is so closely entwined with that of Waynflete, that we shall make no apology to our readers for interrupting the course of our narrative in order briefly to introduce to their notice the unfortunate monarch whose friendship was to exercise so powerful an influence over the destinies of his future chancellor.

Henry V., after a seven years' reign of brilliant conquests, had left the crowns of France and England to his infant heir; during whose long minority the English were once more driven out of France, and the seeds were sown of those civil dissensions which ended a little later in the bloody wars of the Roses. Whilst Humphrey duke of Gloucester and the great Cardinal Beaufort were contending for the chief power in the state, the young king,

"wearing on his baby brow  
The round and top of sovereignty,"

was growing up under the care of Beauchamp the good earl of Warwick, a warrior, a pilgrim, and the descendant of a race of heroes. His royal pupil, however, cared but little for warlike accomplishments; his delight was in a life of mingled study and devotion; and where could he find the realisation of such a life better than in the cloisters of Oxford? So to Oxford he went; and at Queen's College he had as much both of study and devotion as his heart could wish. His uncle, Beaufort, resided with him; for that great man did not think it beneath him to undertake the office of teacher, and in Henry he found an apt and willing pupil. He inherited nothing of his father's heroic spirit, or rather we should say that the only heroism of the

sixth Henry was to be that which is proved by patient suffering. "By nature meek and gentle," writes one of our old historians, "he loved peace rather than war, and quietness of mind rather than worldly business. He was plain, upright, and far from fraud; wholly given to prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, and alms-deeds; and of such integrity of life, that the Bishop who was his confessor for ten years bore witness, that during that time he had kept free from all stain of mortal sin. On all principal holidays he wore sackcloth next his skin; oaths used he none, and in most earnest matters he said no more than the words, 'Forsooth and forsooth.' He loved honesty more than profit. All injuries that ever happened to him he suffered patiently, and reputed them to be worthily sent from God in punishment of his offences." He was a real lover of learning; and in this point, at least, he shared the spirit of his age. The impulse which had been given to study of all kinds by the labours of Wykeham, had by this time produced its results; and the foundations of that great man had sent forth a "brood of scholars," who had infused into all classes of society a learned enthusiasm. All the great men of the day were either learned or the encouragers or learning. There was Humphrey of Gloucester, who presented no fewer than 264 volumes of books to the university of Oxford (a truly royal present before the invention of printing), and who is generally looked on as the first founder both of the divinity schools and the library of that university, towards the erection of which he was a bountiful contributor. There was Talbot, the great Earl of Shrewsbury, the "hardy baron," whose presence in war so encouraged the hearts of the English nation that they thought nothing was able to resist their puissance if only Talbot's banner led the van. He was the greatest captain of his age; but he was almost as renowned a scholar, a lover of Lydgate's verses, and a noble patron of the arts. Witness that exquisite manuscript, still preserved in the British Museum, wherein the great earl is represented offering his illuminated volume to Henry and his queen. Look at the oriel, with its groined and vaulted roof of dazzling blue, thickly powdered with golden stars; see the delicate daisies

which, in compliment to "*la belle Marguerite*," are scattered over the pages with so liberal a hand; and admire the portraits of the royal pair, and of the earl, who kneels before them with his "good dogge" by his side. Another of the English nobles rivalled Talbot in point of scholarship; it was John Tiptoft, surnamed "the learned Earl of Worcester," whose barbarous cruelty in after-years earned him the less honourable title of "the butcher earl." But at the time we speak of he was known only as a generous patron of art and science in every shape, and as a noble benefactor to the University of Oxford, to which he presented certain precious manuscripts which he had collected in eastern lands when performing a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Gilpin says of him, that he "was struck with the first rays of true science, as they began to penetrate from the south, and showed himself zealous in propagating the love of letters among his rude unpolished countrymen. Then among the English prelates, Bishop Longley of Durham was busy founding public libraries at Durham, Leicester, and Manchester; Fleming of Lincoln was commencing another Oxford college; and Chicheley Archbishop of Canterbury, a Wykehamist by education, was imitating the example of his great master by his magnificent foundation of All Souls.

The young king had allowed himself to be called the co-founder of that establishment; but this honorary share in the great work which he saw going on around him was far from satisfying his zeal, and he aspired in his turn to do something for the encouragement of learning and religion which should be truly worthy of a king. It was in the retirement of Windsor, his native place, and his favourite residence, that he revolved in his mind the great idea which possessed him. England had had enough of military glory; she might surely rest awhile on the fame of her Cressys and her Agincourts; another kind of glory rose before the eyes of the gentle and contemplative student, as he wandered at will beneath the grand old oaks of Windsor, whose forest scenery suited well with the temper of his mind. He would create a new era for his country, which too long had resounded with the clang of arms; he would



give her new schools of piety and of science; and instead of sending his young nobles across the Channel, to pour out their blood in a vain struggle for foreign territory, he would fain have seen them at work upon their books in the cloisters which rose before his mind's eye, beautiful and perfect as the imagination of a youth of eighteen could picture them. How he had dwelt and pondered on that lovely ideal may be gathered from the minute and careful directions which he drew up with his own hand for the completion of his work. Wykeham's foundations were the models which he resolved to copy: there was to be a collegiate school, and a college for elder students, which should be fixed, not at Oxford, but at the somewhat neglected University of Cambridge; and year by year his musings took more of shape and consistency, till in 1440 they resulted in the foundation of "the Kynges College of our Lady of Eton, beside Wyndesore," as it was termed in its first charter, issued when the young founder was only in his nineteenth year. The Cambridge college was to bear the title of Our Blessed Lady and St. Nicholas; to be founded "to the honour of God's holy name, for the increase of virtue, the dilation of cunning, and the establishment of the Christian faith." And to carry out his devout purpose, he made over certain lands and possessions, belonging to his own inheritance of the duchy of Lancaster, into the hands of a chosen number of nobles and prelates, as trustees for the building and endowment of his colleges.

The Eton charter, of which we have spoken, throws so much light on the character and intentions of its author, that we cannot resist the temptation of transcribing its opening paragraphs:

*"Henry, by the grace of God King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland, to all to whom these presents may come greeting:*

"The triumphant Church that reigns on high, whose president is the Eternal Father, to which hosts of saints minister, and quires of angels sing the glory of its praise, hath appointed as its vicar upon earth the Church militant, which the only-begotten Son of God hath so united to

Himself in the bond of eternal love, that He hath deigned to name it His most beloved Spouse. In accordance with the dignity of so great a name, He, as a true and loving Spouse, hath endowed her with gifts of His grace so ample, that she is called, and is, the mother and mistress of all who are born again in Christ: and she hath power as a mother over each of them, and all the faithful do honour her with filial obedience. Wherefore holy princes in bygone time, and specially our own progenitors, have so studied always to pay to that most holy Church honour and devout veneration, that, beside other glorious works, their royal devotion has founded, both in this kingdom of England and in divers foreign regions, hostels, halls, and other pious places, copiously established in affluence of goods and substance. Wherefore we also, who (as the same King of kings, through whom all kings do reign, hath ordained) have now taken into our hands the government of both our kingdoms, have, from the very commencement of our riper age, turned it in our mind, and diligently considered how, or after what fashion, or by what kingly gift suited to the measure of our devotion, we could do fitting honour to that same most holy Lady and Mother, so that He, the great Spouse of the Church, should also therein be well pleased. And at length, while we thought these things over with inmost meditation, it has become fixed in our heart to found a college in the parish-church of Eton, near Wyndsore, not far from the place of our nativity, in honour and in aidance of our Mother that is so great and so holy. Being unwilling, therefore, to extinguish so good an inspiration, and desiring with our utmost means to please Him in whose hands are the hearts of princes, in order that He may the more graciously illuminate our heart, so as that we may hereafter direct all our royal actions the more perfectly according to His good pleasure, and so fight beneath His banner in the present Church, that, after serving the Church on earth, we, aided by His grace, may be thought worthy to triumph happily with the Church in heaven,—we, by virtue of these presents, &c., do found and erect, to the praise, glory, and honour of Him who suffered on the cross, to the exaltation of the most glorious Virgin Mary, His

Mother, and to the support of the most holy Church, His Spouse, a college, consisting of one provost and ten priests, four clerks and six chorister-boys, to serve daily in the celebration of divine worship, and of twenty-five poor and indigent scholars, who are to learn grammar, as well as of twenty-five poor and infirm men, whose duty shall be to pray for our welfare whilst we live, and for our soul when we shall have departed this life," &c.

In the following year, Pope Eugenius IV. granted a bull for the erection of the college, together with an indulgence more ample than any previously granted by any Roman Pontiff. A plenary indulgence was to be obtained by all who should visit the college-chapel of Our Lady of Eton on the festival of the Assumption, after confession and communion. The pilgrims were to offer an alms for the support of the college-buildings, and the expulsion of the infidels from the Holy Land.

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## CHAPTER II.

Waynflete's first meeting with Henry. He removes to Eton. The king's designs for his colleges. Beckington's consecration. Waynflete is appointed provost of Eton. Eton statutes and school customs. Catholic schools and schoolmasters.

THE buildings at Eton, and the compilation of a body of statutes, were begun in the same year as the publication of the college-charter. It was natural that Henry should look to the colleges of our Lady of Winchester as furnishing him with the best models for his own. He determined, therefore, to inspect them in person; and his first visit to Winchester seems to have taken place for this purpose in the July of the year 1440. There for the first time he and Waynflete met. Eleven years had passed over Waynflete's head since he had begun his mastership of the collegiate school, and in that space of time he had greatly enlarged and perfected the founder's work. Both Beaufort and Beckington knew his merits, and they did not fail to introduce him to the notice of the young king. At their

first meeting Henry's heart warmed to him with unusual sympathy. The master of Winton was a man after his very heart—simple, devout, refined, and full of learning. Waynflete on his part felt himself powerfully attracted towards his young sovereign: that “holy creature,” as Polydore Vergil calls him, “so full of honest shamefacedness, who thirsted not for worldly honour, but was careful only for his soul's health.” The cloisters of Winton were the fit scene for the meeting of these two souls, destined to be fast bound together in the links of a holy friendship; and fancy readily fills up the picture whose outlines are so briefly traced by the entries in the college-register. Henry was just eighteen; his countenance was handsome, but of that delicate and almost feminine beauty which Hall observes as afterwards characterising the appearance of his son. Dressed in the long gown in which we see him represented in the illuminations of the time, he looked like one who would find a far more congenial home in the student's cell than on a throne, whose occupant must needs be the chief and leader of a warlike feudal nobility. As to Waynflete, we have but to glance at his portrait as it is preserved in the effigy on his tomb. The mild but intelligent eye, the beautiful forehead, the chiselled features, and the thoughtful countenance, bespeak at once the scholar and the man of prayer. Henry's resolution was soon taken; and ere he left Winchester, it was arranged that Waynflete and thirty-five of his scholars should be removed to Eton to begin the new foundation. The removal accordingly took place in 1442, the first stone of the college-chapel having been laid by Henry himself in the July of the previous year; at which time also he began the buildings of King's College, Cambridge, to which Eton was to serve as the preparatory school and seminary. Beautiful as the chapels of these two colleges are in our day, they convey no idea of what Henry intended that they should have been, and of what he would undoubtedly have made them, had not his design been interrupted by the disastrous civil wars, which caused the completion of his favourite plan to fall into the hands of his successor, who bore no kindness to the work which had been established by a Lancastrian

king, but who most unceremoniously robbed the endowments of Henry's foundations that he might enrich and beautify his own.

Even the vaunted windows of King's College are but the shattered remains of those which once glowed in all the splendour of the "orient colour and ymagerie" furnished by the cunning artists of Southwark. It was not Henry's fault if the buildings themselves did not realise his fairy dreams: he left behind him a plan, drawn up with the precision of an architect, for the "edifications" both of Eton and Cambridge, which, had it been carried out, would have rendered them the most perfect of their kind. Nothing was forgotten: the vaulted roof, the stalls and reredos, the walls buttressed and embattled, and "the windows of five days," the many altars which were to stand in the chapel, one between every buttress and under each window of the aisle, the large hall for reading and disputation, the "conduit in the midst of the quadrangle, goodly devised," the pantry and buttery, and "the ways leading thereunto,"—all these are carefully set down, with the thickness and dimensions of every wall; to say nothing of the bakehouse and brewhouse, and "the square court of fourscore foot, for wood and other such-like stuff," which Henry's thoughtfulness provided for the comfort of his students. "And I will," he concludes, "that all things be edified of the most substantiall and best-abiding stuff that may be had; and that the edification of the said colleges shall proceed in large form, clean and substantiall, setting apart superfluitie of too great curious works of entaile and busie moulding."

The chapel of Eton was yet but scarcely begun when it was chosen to be the scene of an interesting ceremony. Beckington had been advanced from his office of royal secretary to fill the vacant see of Bath and Wells; and after receiving consecration in the old church of St. Mary's of Eton, he proceeded to celebrate Mass under a pavilion erected over the spot where Henry had laid the first stone of his college-chapel. Beckington had been among the most zealous supporters of the new foundation; and his friendship with the master of Eton had probably something to do



with his choice of the half-built chapel of the royal college as the scene of his first pontifical Mass. It was doubtless a great day among the scholars and fellows, who entertained all the prelates and company within the college-buildings, which were as unfinished as the chapel, the chambers being yet undivided by any partitions. Two months later, Waynflete was raised to the dignity of provost: the statutes had been prepared in close imitation of those of Winchester; and another Wykehamist, by name William Westbury, was appointed to succeed him as master of the school. The ceremony of his installation took place in the presence of Bishop Beckington and William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk; and when he had "looked into and touched the gospels," and taken the oaths "kneeling reverently and deliberately," he was placed in the chief seat on the right side of the choir, and there in his turn administered the oaths to the other members of the house.

Eton may now be said to have fairly begun its existence as a college. The king often visited it in person, and showed a peculiar interest in its progress. "Whenever," says the author of the *Ms. History of Eton* preserved in the British Museum, "he met any of the students in Windsor Castle, whither they sometimes used to go to visit the king's servants whom they knew, on ascertaining who they were, he would admonish them to follow the path of virtue; and besides his words would give them money, to win over their good-will, saying to them, "Be good boys; be gentle and docile, and servants of the Lord" (*Sitis boni pueri, mites et docibiles, et servi Domini*). Besides the seventy scholars, who were distinguished as "Collegers," and who lodged in the college-buildings, others were received not on the foundation, who lodged in the town, and were known as "Oppidans." From the very first Eton seems to have been a favourite place of education for the sons of the English nobility and gentry, probably from the circumstance of its close vicinity to the Court at Windsor; and the Eton "Oppidans" included scions of the noblest families of England. If our readers are curious to know what English schoolboys were like in the days of Waynflete, they may find a letter in the Paston collection which will amply

satisfy their curiosity, and prove that schoolboys of the fifteenth century bore a marvellous resemblance to those of the nineteenth. Master William Paston was an Eton scholar about twenty years after the foundation of the college; and from his letter, addressed to his elder brother John, we gather that he was badly off for pocket-money; that he was expecting, with characteristic impatience, the arrival of certain "figgs and raisins," to be sent from London by the next barge; and that he rejoiced in the safe transmission of the sum of eightpence, "with the which to buy a pair of slippers." He then goes on to give his brother the particulars of a juvenile love-affair, and concludes with a few remarks on his greatest difficulty—the composition of Latin verses. "As for my coming from Eton," he says, "I lack nothing but versifying,\* which I trust to have with a little continuance." We have also an Eton "Customary," which, though drawn up in the sixteenth century, undoubtedly embodies the usages established in the fifteenth. From the earliest days of the foundation, the principle had been introduced of making the elder boys responsible for the conduct of the younger ones: perhaps this was a feature in Waynflete's system of education; for even in his time three were appointed with authority over the others, to keep order in the dormitory. This was the origin of the "Præpositors," four of whom are alluded to in the "Customary" as presiding in school-time, four in the dormitory, and four more in the playground; whilst one, as the "Moderator Aulæ," preserved order at meals, and two more kept an eye on the conduct of their comrades in chapel. Lastly, we read of one appointed to examine the hands and face of each boy as he entered school; for slovenly habits never found favour at Eton.

The *Consuetudinarium Etoniense* was compiled in Catholic times; and the glimpse it gives of the Catholic usages and devotions existing in our old English seminaries is singularly interesting. At five every morning the "surgite" of the præpositors summoned all to rise. They recited certain prayers in alternate verses as they dressed;

\* He adds two lines of his "own making," in which we grieve to say there occurs a false quantity.

after which, according to Winchester fashion, they swept the floors and made their beds. The prayers at dressing-time seem to have been mainly provided for the purpose of keeping the boys from idle talking; other devotions were ordered by the statutes; and we know not what some of our readers will think, when we tell them that Henry VI. required of each of his scholars the daily recitation of an entire Rosary. "Before the time of High Mass in the church," he says, "they shall say the Lord's Prayer five times, either in the burial-ground, or in the cloisters, in remission of those sins which they have committed by the abuse of their five senses; adding after each prayer a *decade* of angelic salutations, with a *Credo*, in confession of the Christian faith; and altogether they shall say every day the complete Psalter of the Blessed Virgin, containing a *Credo*, fifteen *Paters*, and one hundred and fifty *Ave Marias*." This was not by any means an extravagant demand in days when almost every man who could read was in the habit of saying our Lady's hours, and when not a few laymen daily recited the Divine office; so the Eton boys regularly went through their fifteen mysteries every day. Then we have notices of their pranks at Carnival time,\* and of their confessions at Shrovetide, of their communions on Holy Thursday, their watching at the Sepulchre, and their early rising to greet the day of the Lord's resurrection. Those who had communicated in the morning were treated with a certain reverence throughout the day. They sat at table apart from the others, and were served with a better kind of food at the expense of the college. After dinner they had leave to go out and walk by themselves in the fields; care being taken, however, that this indulgence was not abused. On Good Friday there was no afternoon school, but a sort of spiritual conference was held, the subject being generally the best method of preparing for, and receiving, Holy Commu-

\* On Shrove Tuesday the great amusement was with the crows. The cook was to come and fasten a pancake to an old crow near the school-door, when the flutter and excitement among the young crows on the trees hard by, and the mutual croaks interchanged between the fortunate owner of the pancake and her newly-hatched nestlings, seems to have afforded considerable Shrovetide fun.

nion. Their school-exercises were made in some degree to take the religious character of the season. Thus on All Souls' Day their verses were to be on the hope of immortality, and the blessedness of souls who depart in the faith of Christ; on the feast of St. John Baptist they made songs and pictures on the life of the great precursor, with which they adorned their college dormitory, hanging them about with green boughs and bunches of wild thyme. With all their prayers, however, they found time for study, and hard study too; not only was Latin versification encouraged among them, but they were encouraged to talk in Latin: the "Præpositors" kept strict order in school-hours, and Friday was very appropriately set apart as the flogging day.

But do not let our readers suppose that the life of an Eton boy in Catholic times was made up of nothing but prayer, study, and flogging. Plenty of all these there was, no doubt, but there was also plenty of play. And what joyous hearty play! What May-Day gambols in spring-time, and what glorious expeditions into Windsor Forest during the nutting season! All these are gravely authorised in the "Customary." "On the feasts of SS. Philip and James," we read, "if it seem good to the masters, and if the weather be fair, those who will may rise at four, and go out to gather branches of May, provided that they wet not their feet; and they may then adorn the windows of their dormitory with green leaves, and make the house odoriferous with fragrant herbs." Their verses that day were to be in praise of "the sweet vernal time" of May. And "on a certain day in September" (probably Holy-Cross Day) "a play day shall be freely granted to the scholars, that they may go out and gather nuts; of which, when they have brought them home, they shall offer a portion to their masters. Before they have permission, however, to gather the nuts, they shall write verses describing the abundant fertility of the fruits of autumn, and the coming of winter with its bitter cold." Moreover, on St. Peter's Day and on Midsummer Eve they were to have their bonfires; and on the feast of St. Nicholas they elected their boy-bishop with extraordinary solemnity.

The rule that the boys should share their nuts with their masters is an accidental illustration of the close and affectionate tie which in Catholic times united the teacher and his scholars. We say *in Catholic times*, because undoubtedly the manner in which the office of teaching was then regarded took its colour from the faith. It was looked on as a vocation, not a profession; a trust from God, not a mere means of gaining a livelihood. "O pious Jesu," exclaims a great teacher,\* "who would be ashamed for Thy sake to be humble to little boys? Who should be puffed up with the conceit of his own learning, and disdainful of their ignorance, when Thou, God blessed for ever, in whom are all the treasures of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, didst receive little children into Thine arms? Come then with confidence," he continues; "we will mutually communicate to each other spiritual good things: for I do not require temporal things from you; I will impart to you learning, and you shall give me your prayers; or rather, we will all pray one for another, that we may be saved: and so we shall rejoice the angels, and find mercy with the Father, whilst we listen to His voice."

Such was the true spirit of Catholic schoolmasters: it had been the spirit of that long line of saintly men who in England had shed such glory on the teacher's office; and it was also the spirit of William of Waynflete. He seemed to have inherited the gifts of one whose mitre he was ere long destined to wear, namely the great St. Ethelwold, whom he not a little resembled in more respects than one.† Of him we read that "it was his delight to teach boys and youths, to explain to them Latin books in the English tongue, to instruct them in the rules of grammar and prosody, and to allure them by cheerful language to study and improvement." These words might have been spoken of Waynflete; he too loved prosody and grammar with all his heart, and he knew how to make them loved

\* Gerson.

† St. Ethelwold, besides his love of children and "grammar learning," was a noted church architect, and rebuilt not only his own cathedral of Winchester, but also the churches of Ely, Peterborough, and Thorney.



by others. The company of children was always delightful to him; and they, in their turn, were irresistibly attracted to him by his sweet and gentle manners. The humility, which was his favourite virtue, taught him to make himself little to little ones, well knowing that, to use the words of Gerson, "they are no mean portion of the Church of God;" and so far from considering the labour of teaching as an irksome burden, he was wont to look back on the years he spent at Eton as the happiest of his life. Very willingly would he have been content to have sought no higher preferment than the provostship of the Royal College; but in 1447 a very different career opened before him, and he found himself called upon to exchange his life of studious retirement for the cares and dignity of a mitre.

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### CHAPTER III.

The king's marriage. Margaret of Anjou enters London. Death of Gloucester, and of Beaufort. Waynflete appointed to the see of Winchester. His humility. His enthronisation. State of education in England during the reign of Henry VI. Waynflete's projected college. Political troubles.

THE gentlest and holiest king who had reigned since the Confessor had fallen upon evil times; and his long minority had served to foster a turbulent spirit among his haughty nobles, which it needed the hand of a master to restrain. Not such was Henry of Windsor; and Beaufort, who knew him well, and judged that he needed the support of a stronger and more masculine character than his own, proposed to him an alliance with a princess whose commanding talents would, as he trusted, supply for his nephew's lack of firmness. This was Margaret, daughter of King René of Anjou, a princess whose only dowry was her beauty and her powerful mind. The want of a richer inheritance made the marriage scheme an unpopular one in England; yet when, in the May of 1445, the young queen, then only in her sixteenth year, entered London after the solemnisation of her espousals with Henry at Tichfield Abbey, her exquisite beauty and gracious manners won over the sturdiest grumblers; and nobles and citizens alike

flung away their discontent, stuck their caps full of daisies, and fairly lost their hearts to their beautiful sovereign.

Yet there were some who continued to view the young queen with no friendly eye; and among them was Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, the king's uncle, and the heir-presumptive to the throne. His plans of treason, whatever they may have been, were cut short by his arrest and subsequent death; which those who draw their notices from the pages of Shakespeare will conclude to have been a violent one, but which his own personal friend, Whethamstede, Abbot of St. Albans, a most impartial witness, declares to have been simply the result of sudden illness. Even Shakespeare represents Henry as wholly innocent of his uncle's death, and as bitterly regretting it; although he ever held him to have been guilty of treasonable designs against himself. The charge of murder is laid at the door of his great rival Cardinal Beaufort; though a careful examination of the facts will satisfy any inquirer of the falsehood of the tale. Beaufort had for some time previously withdrawn from the court, and retired to his own diocese. There was little to urge him to such a crime at a moment when his own life was fast ebbing, and when his consciousness of his approaching end was evinced by a careful and deliberate preparation for eternity. Never, probably, has poetic genius succeeded in giving more universal credit to an idle calumny than in the case of the death of Beaufort. We all know the picture drawn by Shakespeare: yet those who from childhood have been familiar with the ravings of his "black despair," as they are so marvellously described by the pen of the great poet, and represented on the canvas of Fuseli, will do well to look on another and a truer picture.

On the 29th of March 1447, the great hall of Wolvesey palace presented a striking spectacle: there were gathered all the clergy of Winchester, and all the monks of the cathedral; they sat in solemn order around a bier, on which lay the cardinal, his hands joined upon his breast, while he listened to the funeral dirge which was sung over him, as though for one already dead. Then followed the whole funeral ceremony, and the reading of his will, by

which all his wealth was bequeathed to the poor. Next day a solemn Mass of Requiem was celebrated; after which Beaufort took leave of his friends and was carried back to his chamber, which he never left again. He died on the 11th of April; and whatever the errors of his life may have been, he was deeply and sincerely lamented by his nephew. When the cardinal's executors offered the king a present of 200*l.* out of his estate, Henry refused to accept it. "He was ever a most kind uncle to me whilst he lived," he said; "may God reward him! Fulfil his intentions, for I will not touch his money." It was accordingly given to the two royal colleges, and Henry's next thought was to provide his successor in the see of Winchester. There was nothing on which this king bestowed more solicitude than the filling up of ecclesiastical dignities; but in the present instance he did not hesitate in his choice. The provost of Eton had long been marked out for promotion; but Henry's appointments had before now been cancelled by his powerful minister Suffolk, who had even gone so far as to deprive Stambury, the king's confessor, of the bishopric of Norwich, to which he had been named by Henry. This circumstance was probably in his mind when he announced his intentions to Waynflete. "Master William," he said, addressing him by the familiar appellation which he was accustomed to use to his beloved provost, "should you obtain a benefice by our favour, do you look to be able to retain it?" Waynflete replied that he would do with diligence whatever the king might order. "Then our will and order is," returned Henry, "that you be Bishop of Winchester." No time had indeed been lost in notifying the royal will to the parties concerned in the election. On the very day of Beaufort's death the *congé-d'élire* was sent to Winchester, with a strong recommendation of "our right trusty and well-beloved clerk and councillor, Master William Waynflete, Provost of Eton." The election was made unanimously, and a deputation of the chapter was despatched to Eton to announce the news to the Bishop elect. Waynflete heard it with a heavy heart; he had found all that his heart desired in the cloisters of Winton and Eton; and as for worldly honours, they had but little

charm in the eyes of one whose favourite devotion was the *Magnificat*. The abiding spirit of his character was a deep humility; it spoke in the sweet affability of his manner, which is noticed by all his biographers as drawing to him the hearts of all men; and it inspired him with an unaffected dread of the pastoral charge, for which, with many tears, he declared himself unworthy. He left the presence of the monks in trouble and perplexity. They sought him during the day, but without success: at last, towards sunset, he was found prostrate before the altar of the college-chapel; he had spent the day in fasting and prayer, that he might know the will of God; and that will once made known to him, he did not dare resist it.

Meanwhile the chapter had notified their proceedings to the Holy See, then filled by Pope Nicholas V., one of the greatest encouragers of learning who ever occupied the chair of St. Peter. Waynflete's merit was well known to him; and the bull by which he "provides" him the Cardinal's successor is dated as early as the 10th of May. All parties, in fact, seem to have been of one mind on the subject of the election; and the 30th of July was fixed for the consecration of the new Bishop. It took place in his own college-chapel. The warden and fellows of Winchester availed themselves of the opportunity to visit their Eton brethren, on which occasion there were of course great festivities. Thirteen shillings and fourpence were distributed among the schoolboys by the "Dons" of Winchester, who likewise presented their newly-consecrated Bishop with a handsome horse. So soon as the ceremony was over, Waynflete repaired to his diocese: but his heart still clung to Eton; and it was there that, by special license granted by the Bishop of Lincoln, he held his first ordination, in the December of the same year. Nor was this the only token of the love he bore to Eton. He had already added to his family bearings the three silver lilies which form the college arms; and these he retained after his elevation to the see of Winchester, transmitting them to the college which he afterwards founded at Oxford. The arms of Waynflete may be seen carved in many parts of the buildings; they are, in heraldic language, *a field fusily, ermine and sable*,

with three lilies slipped, argent, on a chief of the second: to which he now added, as a motto, a verse from the *Magnificat* which he was wont to have ever on his lips: "*Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen ejus;*" nor, in the career on which he was now entering, did he contradict the profession which those words implied.

Externally, however, his position had become one of no little splendour. A great prelate of feudal times was a very great personage indeed, not merely in his spiritual, but also in his temporal capacity. He was attended in public by a courtly retinue, who appeared in all the finery of the times. Beaufort's princely birth had furnished him with a plea for indulging his natural love of magnificence; and the people of Winchester in his day had been accustomed to see their Bishop served on the knee, and followed by a train of armed retainers, whose horses were bedecked with silver trappings. But to Waynflete all this parade was utterly distasteful. He knew, indeed, how to maintain the dignity of his station in a fitting manner, and in all that concerned the Church he also loved magnificence; but for himself, the hooded gown of the schoolmaster of Winton was far more to his taste than the ermined robes of his predecessor. He persevered in the simple habits to which he had grown accustomed; and even the Lollards, who were just then furious in their denunciation of episcopal pride, could find nothing to censure in the conduct of the new Bishop of Winchester. The ceremony of his enthronement did not take place till a full year after his consecration. This long delay was probably to suit the convenience of King Henry, who had resolved to honour his favourite prelate by his personal presence on the occasion. He could not conceal his emotion when he addressed the new Bishop. "Mayest thou be all that the prelates thy predecessors have been," he said; "and may God give thee long life upon earth, and increase in the way of righteousness!" The tie between Waynflete and his sovereign was, indeed, of an unusual kind. It had nothing about it of the character of royal favouritism: it was a friendship based upon religious sympathy; nor does the close affection which bound them together ever seem to have been regarded



with jealousy by the nobles of Henry's court. Winchester came to be a holy place of retirement to him in the midst of the factions and troubles of the time; and we find him residing there for more than a month in the year following that of Waynflete's enthronisation, during which time he and his attendant courtiers regularly attended at Matins, Mass, and Vespers in the college-chapel, Waynflete officiating on these occasions with that extraordinary devotion which he ever displayed in the service of the sanctuary. We have also the account of a splendid function in the cathedral on the festival of SS. Peter and Paul, at which Henry again assisted; whilst Bishop Beckington, who was also present, provided a sumptuous entertainment for the whole college.

Waynflete at this time resided almost entirely at his see; the exercise of his episcopal duties was a delight to him, and there was not one of the religious institutes of Winchester which did not feel the influence of his paternal care. The Benedictine nuns of St. Mary's seem to have very soon become the objects of his affectionate interest; for in the same year we find him receiving several of their novices to profession, and solemnising a pontifical High Mass on the occasion. He also made his visitation of the college, in compliance with the founder's desire that "it might not long be left without that solace;" and in the following year we again find Henry and Waynflete assisting in the college-chapel at the Vespers, Mass, and procession of Palm Sunday, on which occasion a sermon was preached by Dr. Chaundler, the newly-appointed warden of the college, in the room of Robert Thurburne deceased.

The close intimacy existing between the king and the Bishop of Winchester, together with the enthusiasm at all times evinced by the latter for the advancement of "grammar learning," induces us to think that the numerous grammar-schools founded by Henry in the metropolis about this time owed their erection, in some degree, to Waynflete's counsels. We are, for the most part, little aware of the efforts made in the cause of popular education during the centuries previous to the Reformation; nor is there any subject which would more richly reward the labour of research

than that of the old Catholic schools of England. Among the list of their founders, "Holy Henry" deservedly takes the highest place; for, in addition to his nobler foundations of Eton and King's, Stowe tells us that he "ordained that there should be in London grammar-schools, besides St. Paul's at St. Martin's-le-Grand, St. Mary-le-Bow in Cheap, St. Dunstan's in the West, and St. Anthony's. And in the next year, to wit 1447, the said king ordained that four other grammar-schools should be erected in the parishes of St. Andrew, Holborn, Allhallows the Great, St. Peter's, Cornhill, and the Hospital of St. Thomas. As for the meeting of the schoolmasters on festival days," he continues, "at festival churches, and the disputing of their scholars logically, &c., whereof I have before spoken, the same was long since discontinued; but the arguing of the schoolboys about the principles of grammar hath been continued even till our time; for I myself, in my youth, have yearly seen, on the Eve of St. Bartholomew, the scholars of divers grammar-schools repair unto the churchyard of St. Bartholomew in Smithfield, where, upon a bank boarded about under a tree, some one scholar hath stepped up, and there hath opposed and answered, till he were by some better scholar overcome and put down; and then the overcomer, taking the place, did like as the first; and in the end the best opposers and answerers had rewards; which made both good schoolmasters and good scholars, who diligently against such times prepared themselves for the obtaining of this garland." The custom of which Stowe here speaks, as becoming antiquated in his time, existed in full vigour in the fifteenth century; and the scholars of London met and disputed over grammar and logic with the same ardour as was displayed in the more learned schools of Oxford. These grammar-schools, it must be remembered, were not intended for any privileged classes; the terms used by their founders show how widely they sought to diffuse the blessings of education. "For poor men's children," "for all children sent thither without exception," "for poor scholars,"—such are the expressions which again and again occur, bearing ample evidence that our Catholic forefathers were not indifferent

to the education of the lower classes. Indeed, the cathedral schools, which were the first erected in England, were intended mainly for the poor; and it was a Pope\* who decreed that every cathedral chapter should provide a schoolmaster, and assign him a benefice, "because the Church of God, as a pious Mother, is bound to provide for the poor, lest the opportunity of reading and improving themselves be taken away from them."

This was in the twelfth century, in the midst of what was called the dark ages. But even from an earlier period the education of the people had been recognised as a thing for which the laws of the Church and of the realm were bound carefully to provide. The English ecclesiastical institutes ordained that all "Mass priests should have in their houses a school of disciples; and that if any good man should desire to commit his little ones to them for instruction, they ought very gladly to receive and kindly to teach them. Neither should they require any thing from the relations of such children, except what they might be willing freely to give of their own accord." The reason for this was evident; the teaching of the poor was understood to be one of the duties of the parochial priest, and that with which, by his office, he was bound to charge himself.

Nor was it alone among churchmen that we find these efforts made for the education of the lower classes. Most of the large guilds had their school as well as their hospital, both being supported out of the common funds. The college of Corpus Christi at Cambridge was founded by the aldermen and brethren of two of these guilds, that of Corpus Christi and of our Lady. Even the feudal lords were not altogether backward in providing for the education of their people. In the old records of Catholic times we often meet with abundant evidence to show that whatever crime and violence there may have been during these semi-barbarous centuries, other and better features were not wanting in a society bound together by the feudal ties. In the following beautiful picture our readers will see that the poor-school is not forgotten; and we have chosen it, in prefer-

\* Alexander III.: Council of London, 1138.

ence to many like examples which might be given, because its date is in fact contemporary with our present sketch; William de la Pole, the unfortunate Duke of Suffolk who is therein mentioned, being an intimate friend of Waynflete, at the ceremony of whose installation at Eton we have seen him personally assisting. He was, like so many of King Henry's other courtiers, a man of letters; and had married a granddaughter of the poet Chaucer. At his manor of Ewelme in Oxfordshire, he and his wife had spent their money and their labour in creating a rural paradise. They began by rebuilding their parish church, "a comely piece of worke standing on a fair hill; and hard adjoining to it, they founded a prety hospitall or almse house for two priests, chaste of bodie and devoute in soull, and thirteene poore men, to dwell and bee sustayned in it for ever. One of the priests was to bee master of the almes house and almes people, them to instruct as well by his sound doctrine as his good life; the other priest a *schoolemaster, freely to teach the children of the tenants of the said lordship of Ew-elm, and other lordships pertayning to the said lordship of Ew-elm, their grammar*: and eiche of these priests was to have tenne poundes the yeere. One of the thirteene poore men to bee called the minister, to present the faultes of the others to the master, and to ring their common bel to service."\* This house was called God's House, or the house of alms, and was endowed with three fair manors, with all their timber and appurtenances. Thousands like it were scattered over the face of this country at the time of which we write; and there were few villages in England which could not show their

"Litel scole of Christen folk that stood  
Down at the farther end, in which there were  
Children in scores that came of Christen blood,  
And lerned within that school house yere by yere  
Such kind of doctrine as men usèd there;  
That is to say, to singen, and to rede,  
As all smal children do in their childhede."

In such schools, as Chaucer goes on to tell us, might be

\* Stowe's Chronicles.

seen "the litel childe, his litel book lerning," conning his primer, or, it may be, sweetly singing the *Alma Redemptoris*, or some other of our Lady's antiphons. Sometimes the village school was held within the church itself, but oftener in an adjoining building; and during the century which preceded the Wars of the Roses, the erection of school-houses, and the foundation of free grammar-schools, were among the favourite works of charity. We need not wonder, therefore, at the extraordinary zeal for the foundation of all kinds of schools which was displayed by Waynflete, and other great prelates who shared as well in his liberality as in his love of learning. As to him, education was his hobby; and he was already occupied with a design, the thought of which had engaged him for many years, namely, the foundation of another great college which he had resolved to raise at Oxford. This was for a higher class of students; whilst for the poorer and less cultivated, he contemplated establishing one of the plain old English grammar-schools in his native place. His determination may seem at first sight a little strange; the foundations so recently made by Wykeham, Chicheley, Fleming, and Henry VI. might to many have appeared sufficient to satisfy the wants of the times: yet Waynflete did not think so. He was fully aware of the discouragement against which the students of the universities were then contending in consequence of the Statute of Provisors, which had deprived the Holy See of its right of patronage, and had been followed by most disastrous results. In 1399 we find the universities generally complaining, that "whilst the Popes had conferred benefices by provision the preference had always been given to men of talent and industry, and that this had quickened the application and increased the numbers of their students;" but that since the passing of these obnoxious statutes all was altered, and hence the schools of Oxford had become well-nigh deserted. In fact, the English universities just then held so low a place in the estimation of the learned, that the University of Paris had even broken off its connection with that of Oxford, as though unworthy of its notice.

Waynflete sincerely loved the university at which he



had been educated, and had always protected its interests to the best of his ability. He had proposed to Henry to erect a royal college there; but the king gave the preference to Cambridge, assigning as his reason the anxiety he felt to keep up both seats of learning in his realm. What he could not obtain from others, therefore, he determined to supply out of his own means, hoping that an institution such as he contemplated erecting would make its way against all the discouragements of the times. It was in the May of 1448 that he obtained the royal grant empowering him to found a hall at Oxford for the study of divinity and philosophy: it was to consist of a president and fifty poor scholars, and to be called after his favourite patroness, "the glorious Apostoless," St. Mary Magdalen. It was to be erected on the site of four smaller halls which had fallen into decay, and to serve as a preparatory school to the yet nobler college which he designed to found. The new society took possession of the buildings and gardens of the suppressed halls of Bostar, Pencrych, Nightingale, and Hare. Early in the August of the same year, Waynflete's intention was to have begun the erection of his college without any delay. Very gladly would he have spent his life in the discharge of holy duties and holy functions, and the realisation of his grand schemes for the restoration of learning. But those schemes had to be deferred to a distant day; for already the political horizon was black with clouds, whose gathering the good Bishop beheld with an anxious eye. He laboured to avert the coming storm by prayer, and issued mandates to the clergy and laity of his diocese to set apart certain days for processions and special intercession "on behalf of the king, the Church, and the realm of England; that the Most High might be propitiated by their suffrages and works of piety; that all wars and dissensions might have an end; and that in their place tranquillity and prosperity might prevail in the beauty of peace:" at the same time granting an indulgence of forty days to all who, having confessed their sins with true contrition, should take part in these devotions.

## CHAPTER IV.

Claims of the House of York. Insurrection of Jack Cade. Dispersion of the rebels. Conduct of the Duke of York. Illness of the king. Birth of Prince Edward. Waynflete's interview with the king. Henry's recovery. The battle of St. Albans. The Duke of York Protector. Henry resumes the royal power. The new Lancastrian ministry. Waynflete is appointed lord high chancellor.

AT the conclusion of the last chapter we alluded to the political troubles which for a time interfered with Waynflete's charitable schemes, and threatened to involve the whole nation in frightful discord. A general feeling of discontent prevailed among all classes in consequence of the ill-success of the English arms in France. The conquests of the fifth Henry had been lost during the long minority of his successor; even Normandy was now restored to the French crown; and the people, who had been so long accustomed to regard themselves as secure of victory, had to hear of nothing but losses, disasters, and disgrace. They bore the mortification very badly, and attributed all their troubles to the incapacity of the queen's favourite minister, the Duke of Suffolk. A party was soon formed against him, which succeeded in driving him from the kingdom; but as he was leaving the English shores, he was overtaken and basely murdered at the instigation of his enemies, who consisted chiefly of the partisans of the Duke of York. This nobleman was the legitimate heir to the crown, if legitimacy is to be reckoned solely by nearness of blood. His mother, Ann Plantagenet, was the sister to that Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, who by his descent from Lionel Duke of Clarence, the elder brother of John of Gaunt, represented the male line of King Edward III. On the death of Richard II., this young Earl of March was of course the next heir to the crown, and had been so recognised by that unfortunate monarch during his lifetime. But when Henry of Lancaster usurped the throne, he seized possession of the earl, and kept him a close prisoner till the day of his own death. Henry V., with the gallant generosity that so distinguished him, no sooner found him-

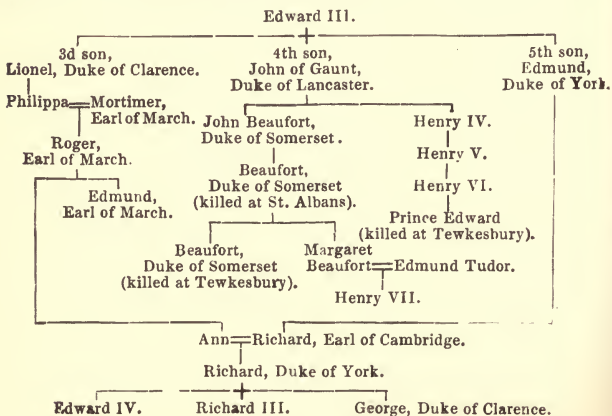
self king of England than he set at liberty the young prince whose rightful claims might have made him so formidable a rival. But his rival Edmund Mortimer never once dreamt of becoming. We doubt if history can show any thing more singular or more romantic than the devoted friendship which bound the legitimate heir of England with the monarch whose father had usurped his rights. The chivalrous character of Harry of Monmouth had won from him an attachment which no selfish ambition was able to shake. He would join in no conspiracy which had for its object the advancement of his own just claims; when the Earl of Cambridge, his sister's husband, disclosed to him his plans of insurrection, he refused to take any part in the scheme, and immediately communicated it to the king; then, accompanying the English army across the Channel, he gallantly fought for Henry as his liege and true subject on the field of Agincourt.

Cambridge died on the scaffold; but his widow, becoming, after the death of March, the next representative of her royal house, left her claims to her son Richard, Earl of Cambridge and Duke of York. This young noble by no means shared the romantic unselfishness of his uncle March. He might have been disposed to have respected the claims of the reigning sovereign, resting as they did on the will of the people, who had acknowledged the rule of the house of Lancaster during two successive reigns. The glorious achievements of Henry V., and the guileless character of his son, had rendered the Lancaster dynasty a popular one with the nation. But if that son died without an heir, the throne would then descend to the Duke of Somerset, the next representative of his family; one who possessed no particular claim on the people's favour, and whose right by descent could not of course bear a moment's comparison with that of Richard of York. Viewing the matter merely as a question of personal right, there was, indeed, no reason why he, the true heir, should resign his own interests in favour of a rival such as Somerset. Yet whatever the strict justice of his claims, his conscience might well have shrunk from the thought of plunging the nation into the horrors of civil war, for the purpose of setting upon his

own brows the gilded bauble of a crown. And it is evident that he hesitated very long before he could resolve on any decided act of insurrection. To the king he felt himself bound by the ties of allegiance, as well as by the reverence of which all were conscious who approached the person of holy Henry; but in the presence of Somerset his jealousy and heart-burnings could not be restrained, and the English court was soon distracted by the quarrels of their respective partisans.\*

There is reason to believe that the formidable insurrection, which broke out in the summer of 1450, was in reality a deep-laid scheme for ascertaining the popular feeling towards the house of Mortimer. This insurrection was headed by John Cade, an Irish adventurer, who pretended to be a son of the late Earl of March, and consequently the duke's own cousin, and the real heir to the crown. He easily persuaded the men of Kent to join his standard by the promise of an abolition of taxes; and having

\* A glance at the following table will give the reader a clearer understanding of the claims of the respective parties. It must, however, be understood that John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, was not the legitimate son of John of Gaunt, and had only been declared so by act of parliament; his claim, therefore, to represent his house as heir to the throne was, strictly speaking, quite inadmissible.



defeated the troops sent against him, he came to Blackheath, says Hall, "with a multitude of evil, rude, and rustic persons, and there strongly encamped himself." The king was forced to take refuge in Kenilworth Castle; and Cade entered the city in triumph, striking his sword on London Stone, with the boastful exclamation, "Now is Mortimer lord of the city," and riding through all the streets "like a lordly captain." Several noblemen and gentlemen were seized and put to death; but on the third day the citizens plucked up courage to resist the insurgents, and a bloody street-fight followed, which ended by Cade being driven out of London into Southwark; having first, however, broken open the gaols and set loose the prisoners.

All this time Stafford, Archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of the kingdom, had been shut up in the Tower; and Waynflete, who was also in London, had taken refuge in Halywell Castle. They were now able to communicate with one another; and Waynflete proposed the humane and courageous plan of dispersing the rioters, not by force of arms, but by the offer of a general pardon. The Archbishop readily entered into his idea; and the next day the two prelates crossed the water with a few attendants, and boldly presented themselves to the multitude. They offered a free pardon, under the great seal, to all who should lay down their arms and quietly disperse. The poor rustics, who looked for nothing but hanging and quartering, were glad enough to accept such easy terms; "yea, more so," says Hall, "than of the great jubilee of Rome;" and by nightfall their redoubtable leader found himself without a follower. A price being set upon his head, he was soon afterwards taken and slain by a Kentish gentleman named Iden; and Henry was welcomed back to his capital by the two Bishops whose courage had put down the insurrection.

Scarcely, however, had this storm blown over, when it was followed by one far more threatening. York, who had been invested with the government of Ireland, returned from that country, and made his appearance at court, attended by a retinue of four thousand men. His rival, Somerset, was then in France; but he instantly hastened back to London, and the quarrels of the two



parties became fiercer than ever. On a morning of melancholy interest in the annals of England, Somerset, attended by a party of his friends, met in the Temple Gardens with the Earl of Warwick, a warm and powerful partisan of the house of York. The dispute began which Shakespeare has so finely dramatised. The rival claims of York and Lancaster were hotly contested; till at last Somerset appealed to the bystanders, and plucking a red rose from a bush which grew beside him, called on all those who held with him to declare their sentiments by wearing his badge or emblem. Warwick instantly imitated his example by plucking a white rose for the house of York; his followers did the same, and from that day the red and white roses became the badges of the rival parties. The incident was not long before it reached the ears of the queen, who had contracted a warm friendship for all the princes of the Beaufort line; she immediately selected a red rose, and wore it openly, saying, "I am of this party, and I will maintain it;" and by this show of partisanship she most indiscreetly fostered those deadly feuds which she would have done more wisely to have soothed and reconciled.

Amid the distracting scenes which followed Waynflete took an active share; but it was not as a party agent. We find him again and again employed by Henry to negotiate with the duke, and induce him to disperse his followers; for at the very time when that nobleman was publishing a proclamation offering to prove his loyal intentions by swearing fealty to Henry on the Most Holy Sacrament, he was raising the feudal tenants of his house, and endeavouring to draw the Kentish malcontents to his standard. The efforts of Waynflete for a time restored tranquillity; and York, disbanding his army, consented to renew his homage to the king, on condition that his rival, Somerset, should be arrested.

The anxiety caused by these tumults, and by his dread of their too probable results, were meanwhile producing the most fatal effects upon Henry's health. Mind and body seemed alike breaking down; and in his anguish we find him repairing in pilgrimage to Canterbury, to implore the intercession of the glorious martyr St. Thomas on be-

half of his distracted realm. Waynflete was among the prelates who received him there; and about the same time fresh mandates were issued by him to the Winchester clergy for prayers and processions and other good works, whereby to avert from the nation the calamities with which it was threatened. But in the September of the year 1453, the king was seized with an attack of the dreadful malady which he inherited from his grandfather, Charles VI. of France. For a time his reason seemed entirely gone, and his life itself was well-nigh despaired of. He was with difficulty removed from Clarendon, where he had been taken ill, to Westminster; and there, a few weeks later, his queen gave birth to a son,—“the child,” as he is called by the historian Speed, “of sorrow and infelicity.” He was born on the feast of St. Edward; and Waynflete, who performed the ceremony of his baptism, bestowed on him the name of that saint, at the desire of the queen, who trusted that a name so dear to the English people would win for its bearer something of their love and loyalty.

Meanwhile the Duke of York took advantage of the king's unhappy state to seize the reins of government; and when the parliament re-assembled, it was he who opened the sessions, with the self-assumed title and authority of royal-lieutenant. The parliament, however, showed no disposition to transfer their allegiance from a sovereign who was universally beloved and venerated; and as both the primacy and the chancellorship of the kingdom had been left vacant by the death of Cardinal Kemp, they nominated a commission, with the Bishop of Winchester at its head, to wait upon the king, and, if possible, to ascertain his pleasure touching the filling up of these appointments. The commissioners accordingly repaired to Windsor, whither Henry had been conveyed by the queen's orders; and, being admitted to his presence, declared their errand. But Henry gave no token that he either heard or understood them. He sat without speech or motion, like one asleep or dead; and when they sought to remove him to his bedchamber, he had to be carried between two men. After three interviews with him, they departed full of sorrow, and reported to the parliament the

unhappy state in which they had found their sovereign. Letters-patent were therefore issued appointing the Duke of York protector of the realm, until such time as the prince should attain to years of discretion. He lost no time in using his power to secure his own advantage. Somerset was arrested, and sent to the Tower; but soon afterwards the recovery of the king put an end to the protectorate, and York saw himself forced to resign his office, and witness the release of his hated rival. By Christmas Henry had regained entire consciousness; he appeared like one awakening from a long dream; and his first act was to despatch his almoner to Canterbury with a votive offering to St. Thomas, and another to the shrine of St. Edward at Westminster. Margaret and Waynflete then ventured to present the young prince to his father. "On Monday, at noon," writes one of his attendants, "the queen came to him, and brought my lord prince with her; and he asked what the prince's name was, and the queen told him 'Edward.' Then he held up his hands, and thanked God thereof; and he said he never knew him till that time, nor wist what was said to him, nor where he had been. Then the queen told him that the Cardinal was dead; and he said he knew not of it till then, and that one of the wisest lords of the land was dead. And my lord of Winchester and my lord [prior] of St. John of Jerusalem were with him the morrow after Twelfth-day, and he did speak to them as well as ever he did, so that when they came out they wept for joy. And he saith he is in charity with all the world, and so he would that all the lords were. And now he saith matins of our Lady and even-song, and heareth his Mass devoutly."

But the joy caused by this event was of very short continuance; it seemed to hasten the designs of the Yorkist party; and in spite of the earnest labours to which the good king at once applied himself, in order to effect a reconciliation between the rival dukes, York at last raised his standard in open revolt; and, marching to St. Albans, whither Henry had advanced to meet him, insolently demanded that Somerset and his chief followers should be delivered into his hands. Even Henry's meek and gentle

spirit took fire at this indignity, and he returned an answer such as might have been dictated by his warlike father, to the effect "that he would sooner yield up his crown than either the duke or the least soldier in his army, and that he was ready that day to live or die in the defence of those who were faithful to him." The Earl of Warwick immediately began the attack on the town. A desperate conflict ensued in the narrow streets, in the course of which Henry was wounded in the neck by an arrow. But the victory soon declared itself for the Yorkists: Somerset was taken, and immediately slain; and York, entering the king's presence, bent his knee with affected humility, and bade him rejoice that the traitor had met with the fate he merited. "For God's sake, then," replied Henry, "stop the slaughter of my subjects." York complied with his request; the conflict ceased, and, taking the king by the hand, he conducted him first to the shrine of St. Alban, and then to his apartment in the adjoining abbey.

By this victory York recovered the office of protector, and the whole executive power of the crown. But Henry still retained the affections of his people; and when, in the February of 1456, by the spirited advice of Queen Margaret, he appeared in the House of Lords, and declared that, "being of God's blessing restored to health, he would resume the reins of government with his own hands," the parliament gave him their support; and York and his partisans were again obliged to retire. Another Lancastrian ministry was now formed. Bouchier the chancellor was removed from office, and the Bishop of Winchester was selected as the fittest person to succeed him. Accordingly, on the 11th of October 1456, Waynflete was summoned to the priory of Coventry, where Henry was then holding his court; and there, in the presence of many lords, spiritual and temporal, the great seal was committed to the custody of one whose moderation and impartiality through the whole of these distracting events had won the esteem and confidence of both the contending parties.

## CHAPTER V.

Waynflete's chancellorship. He draws up the Eton statutes. Prosecution of the Bishop of Chichester. The king arbitrates between the rival parties in the state. The procession of reconciliation. Waynflete proceeds with the foundation of his college. His love of architecture. Waynflete's friends. Recommencement of hostilities. Battles of Bloreheath and Ludlow. Attainder of the Duke of York. Waynflete resigns the chancellorship. The compromise. Battle of Wakefield. Death of the Duke of York. Battle of Towton. Victory and coronation of Edward IV.

IT may easily be believed that, amid such scenes as those which preceded the wars of the Roses, Waynflete had found no leisure for proceeding with his Oxford foundation. In fact, whether he wished it or not, he had been obliged to take a prominent part in public affairs, and for a time to give up his favourite projects, and embark on the troubled sea of politics. Not, indeed, that they absorbed all his cares, or those of the king, whose attention was never entirely diverted from his favourite schemes, and who, with a frame shattered at once by mental and bodily suffering, yet found time to provide for the completion of Eton College, and the perfecting of its statutes. Those published by him in 1446 had been found on trial incomplete in many particulars; and in 1455, only two months after the battle of St. Albans, he issued orders to the Bishops of Winchester and Lincoln to correct and revise them as they might judge expedient. Waynflete at once applied himself to the task, and with such success, that Henry added a clause with his own hand, wherein he ordained, that out of gratitude for his services, both the colleges of Eton and King's should, on the decease of the Bishop, celebrate solemn obsequies for his soul, together with "commendations and a morrow Mass," within twelve days preceding the feast of the Nativity; a suffrage which he provided for no other person except the king his father, his mother, and his wife, Queen Margaret of Anjou.\*

\* He had already made provision in his will for the completion of his colleges in case of his death; and "in consideration of the



Soon after these statutes were completed, Waynflete had to take part in a much less agreeable business. The Lollards had taken advantage of the civil commotions once more to propagate their doctrines, and thereby very considerably to foment the general disturbance of the realm. Foremost among their supporters was Reginald Peacocke, an old acquaintance of Waynflete's, who had received the orders of subdeacon and deacon together with him, and had since become a noted preacher. But his pulpit-eloquence had become his snare; he aimed at popularity, and thought there was no more likely road to win the favour of the multitudes than by reviving some of the levelling doctrines of the noted John Ball. In the same year which witnessed Waynflete's consecration, therefore, Peacocke, who had been raised to the see of Chichester through the favour of the Duke of Suffolk, preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross, made up of the most violent attacks on the higher clergy, and appeals to the worst passions of the mob. It was followed by popular riots; and Peacocke was obliged to leave London in disgrace. In his retirement he used his pen to set forth the same dangerous doctrines; and soon after Waynflete's appointment to the chancellorship it was found necessary formally to examine his writings, in order to decide on their orthodoxy. In the October of 1457, he was cited to appear at Lambeth before the Archbishop, and the Bishops of Winchester, Rochester, and Lincoln. His books were examined and condemned, as containing the worst heresies of the Lollards; and he was sentenced, not to be burnt, as some of our readers are probably anticipating, but to sit in his pontificals at the feet of his metropolitan, and there to behold the burning of his heretical books in St. Paul's Churchyard; after which he was suffered to retire to an abbey on a pension for the rest of his days. Waynflete likewise exerted himself to prevent the contagion of his teaching from spreading to Oxford, and obtained another decree for the burning of his books from the convocation of the university, which was carried

great discretion, high truth, and fervent zeal for his welfare, which he had proved in the Bishop of Winchester," appointed him his surveyor, executor, and director in all that concerned them.

into effect by Chaundler, at that time warden of New College, and chancellor of the university.

During the three years which followed King Henry's resumption of power, Waynflete's untiring energies were bent to the preservation of peace. In company with Archbishop Bouchier, and several other prelates, he persuaded the leaders of the two hostile parties to submit all their differences to the arbitration of the king. York and Warwick renewed their oaths of fealty, and swore never more to seek redress of grievances by force of arms, but to remit all their quarrels to the justice of their sovereign. By common agreement they then all repaired to London; the Yorkists were lodged within the city, and the king's followers outside the walls, while the mayor, at the head of 5000 armed citizens, was charged to preserve the peace. Every day the partisans of the White Rose assembled at the Black Friars, and those of the Red Rose at the White Friars; Waynflete and the other prelates going from one assembly to the other, communicating the result of their daily deliberations, which were laid in the evening before the king and the judges. Henry, who had long shown himself the most impartial man in his own dominions, spared no pains to come to a just decision; but sometimes his heart sickened within him at these endless scenes of petty discord, and then his only resource was prayer. At such times he would detain Waynflete from the council, bidding the other lords attend without him: "My lords," he would say, "do you go and consider these matters; I and my chancellor will meanwhile offer our prayers together for the common weal." At last the terms of agreement were drawn up, and Waynflete affixed the great seal to them on the 24th of March; after which, in token of their perfect reconciliation, the chiefs of the hostile parties walked hand in hand in solemn procession, and headed by the king, to St. Paul's Cathedral, the Duke of York leading the queen, whilst Beaufort, son and successor to the late Duke of Somerset, walked side by side with his inveterate enemy the Earl of Salisbury. It was the feast of our Lady's Annunciation; a day chosen by Henry's piety as the best fitted for what he formally

hoped was to be the commencement of a blessed peace. Dressed in his royal robes, and wearing his crown, he walked at the head of his turbulent nobles with a happy grateful heart; whilst the people expressed their joy by loud acclamations, and showered forth their blessings on all who had wrought the good work of reconciliation.

“Our sovaine lord, God keep alwaye,  
And the queene and the Archbisshope of Canterburye,  
And all other that have laboured to make this love-daye.”

During this time Henry seems generally to have held his court at Coventry, where Waynflete constantly attended him. His health was still very feeble; and the nobles of his own party, who seem to have regarded the person of their sovereign with a veneration which had in it a character peculiarly touching, were perpetually applying to him for leave to go on pilgrimage to foreign shrines, that they might obtain from God his perfect recovery and the pacification of his kingdom. Among these we find John Mowbray, “the good duke of Norfolk,” binding himself by vow to visit the Holy Sepulchre, and pray for the recovery of his sovereign’s health; whilst several others made the pilgrimage to Rome and Loretto. Waynflete took advantage of this brief interval of peace to think of his poor scholars at Oxford. The time seemed come for him to take some steps for commencing his college; but the buildings already occupied by his students were in a most inconvenient situation, and he had set his heart on securing the hospital for pilgrims which was dedicated to St. John Baptist, and which had been erected by Henry III. outside the city-walls, on a spot adjoining the Jewish burying-ground. The changes and improvements which had taken place in the city since the foundation of this hospital rendered it no longer necessary for its original purpose; and Waynflete proposed to erect his college on its noble site, and at the same time to keep up the old charities of the hospitallers, so that the poor might not suffer by the change. When he explained his scheme to the king, Henry heard him graciously, but did not fail to put in a good word for Cambridge, which he had chosen for his own foundation.

He wished his chancellor to transfer his benefactions to that university, which we must suppose was in even a more depressed state than Oxford; but Waynflete would not give up the cause of his Alma Mater. "Well, Master William," replied the king, addressing him with his accustomed familiarity, "sith it must be so, we think well of your piety, and will forward it to the best of our powers." License was therefore granted to the master of the hospital to surrender it to Waynflete; and a royal charter was granted him for the foundation of his college, which, like the hall already founded, was to be dedicated to the glorious apostles St. Mary Magdalen, "for the increase of virtue and the maintenance of the Catholic faith, for the general advancement of the liberal sciences and the manifold utility of all students."

William Tybarde was named first president; a man in whom the founder placed such implicit confidence, that, during the one-and-twenty years he governed the society, it was not thought necessary to provide any written statutes. The hospital was incorporated with the college, where pilgrims were still received, and poor boys fed from the remains of the tables; and so late as the seventeenth century this old pilgrim hospital still survived in the shape of the College Almshouse. The necessary papal bulls for the foundation of the college were also obtained, various purchases of land were made, and "divers ceremonies of law belonging thereunto" were gone through; all of which are very fully narrated by the historians of the university, but would prove of little interest to the reader. Among other privileges, however, obtained from the Holy See, was the important one which exempted the new society from the episcopal or legatine authority of the see of Lincoln (in which Oxford was then included), and transferred it altogether to the jurisdiction of the Bishops of Winchester. When all these preliminaries were arranged, the society took up their residence, partly in the old hospital buildings, and partly in those which had been included under the name of Magdalen Hall, President Tybarde assuming the government. He was a man of varied accomplishments:

and amongst other branches of science, was almost as skilful an architect as Waynflete himself, with whom Church architecture had always been a favourite pursuit. The bishop had presided personally over many works both at Windsor and at Eton; and the repairs of his episcopal palace are entered in his register with a minuteness which betrays his innate love of bricks and mortar. In this he resembled the other great men of his time; and the little knot of friends which included the names of Waynflete, Beckington, Chaundler, Thurburn, and Tybarde, have left memorials of themselves on the walls of the college to which they were benefactors. The tower of Winchester College was built by the joint contributions of four of these good men, whose arms may still be found carved on the roof of the oratory beneath it. But besides their arms, the careful examiner will find certain devices, or *rebus*es, intended to perpetuate their names: thus the capitals T and C twined together, and crossed with two burning tapers represent Chaundler, the college warden; a beacon and a tun, for Bishop Beckington, come next; with a thurible with burning incense for Robert Thurburne, the founder of the oratory.\* This last device has considerably puzzled some modern antiquaries, who, not being very familiar with either incense or thuribles, have contentedly set down the thurible for a rose, and its smoke for the rays of the sun. Waynflete has no *rebus*, but is sufficiently distinguished by his favourite Eton lilies; and the whole forms an interesting monument of the friendship which united these good men together. The earliest of these friends of Waynflete, as he was undoubtedly the most distinguished, was Bishop Beckington. Little, indeed, as his name is generally known among ourselves, he was one of the greatest Englishmen of his own times; and the twenty-two years during which he held his see were spent in continual acts of princely munificence. Vast as were his revenues, they were surpassed by his charity, his liberality, and his love of learning. There was not a single scheme of benevolence or usefulness in which

\* In the same way, we find in some of the Oxford buildings a herald's *tabard*, or embroidered coat, to signify the excellent Tybarde.



he did not take a share. His benefactions to New College were so considerable, that Chaundler styles him the principal support of the college. His learning may be gathered from his treatise on the Salique law, which is still extant. His liberality has left its noblest monuments in his cathedral city of Wells. A great part of the cloisters, as well as the chantry chapel which bears his name, were all erected by him; and the beacon and tun appear on almost all the episcopal houses in the diocese, bearing evidence by whom they were rebuilt and beautified. But his generosity was not limited to adorning his cathedral. Among other benefactions to the city of Wells, he built "the new work," as it was called,—a row of houses near the market-place; and gave permission to the citizens to have a conduit, which he supplied with water by pipes communicating with St. Andrew's Well, within his own palace.\* He was sixty years of age when appointed to his see; yet the vigour and enterprising spirit which he displayed, and the largeness of his undertakings, were such as might have been more naturally looked for in one of half his years. He was as devoted a lover of learning as Waynflete himself; and one of his benefactions to Wells consisted of what, in the language of the times, is called "a goodly school," together with the schoolmaster's lodgings and an exchequer over it, lighted with twenty-five fair windows. This school is (if we mistake not) now used as the choral college of the cathedral. At eighty the old man was still engaged in his buildings and foundations, some of which he did not live to complete. He constantly refused to exchange his diocese for a richer one; he had been born in it, and desired also to die in it. His death is said to have been

\* "It is at Wells," says Sir Harris Nicolas (in the life prefixed by him to the Bishop's "Journal," which he republished in 1829), "that the lover of the arts, and the admirer of the zeal and disinterestedness of the prelates of the middle ages, will be most impressed with respect for Bishop Beckington. But whilst viewing the effects of his munificence, will he be able to refrain from asking himself why it is that the most opulent successors of these great men have so rarely imitated them? Will his respect for the established order of things be sufficient to repress the reflection, that with nearly the same revenues, the modern clergy seldom beautify or repair cathedrals or found colleges?"

hastened by the fate of his sovereign, whose dethronement and imprisonment, in 1465, almost broke his heart. He had already, as we have said, prepared his chantry in the cathedral church of Wells, which he had dedicated and consecrated in person full fourteen years before he died. On the 13th of January 1451, he sang an early Mass of our Lady at the chantry altar; and two days later, dressed in the pontificals which he had worn on the day of his consecration, and in the which, says the Episcopal Register, he willed also to be buried, he consecrated his sepulchre with great devotion, and then, at the same altar, celebrated a requiem Mass for the souls of all Bishops and all the faithful departed. This touching ceremony was performed in the presence of the canons and of an immense congregation. Those who love the memory of prelates such as he was,—and there were many like him once in England,—may still visit his tomb, where, under a richly-wrought canopy, lies his alabaster effigy, represented dressed in full pontificals; whilst below it is carved another effigy, that of his *cadaver*, or emaciated corpse; a most significant emblem of the nothingness of earthly pomp, which is not uncommonly found on the tombs of ecclesiastics of this period, and which, however repulsive it may appear to modern tastes, marks in a very striking manner the habitual feeling with which the great prelates of former days regarded their own greatness, never separated as it was in their minds from the chastening memory of death and judgment.

Such was one of Waynflete's chosen friends; of whom Chaundler, another of the little society, declares, that he was the most accomplished man of his times, and possessed of every virtue which can adorn human nature. Chaundler himself was a man of great ability. He wrote the lives of the two founders Wykeham and Waynflete, together with certain dialogues in praise of the first-named prelate, which he addressed to Beckington. The affection with which they all regarded one another had in it something of that peculiar tenderness which we discover in the character of the men of the middle ages,—a tenderness which, if we might hazard a conjecture, grew out of their humility, and

the decay of which in later ages we may attribute to the growth of that pride which makes a man ashamed to avow that he in any way leans or depends upon his fellow-man. To this kind of pride Waynflete was a total stranger. His sweet and gentle character attracted the love of others, and was as easily attracted; similarity of tastes united him with those who, like himself, loved books and architecture, and spent their money in building churches and schools and hospitals, and in every work which piety or charity could suggest. The tie was one of human sympathy, sanctified and elevated by the love of God: this made it holy and enduring; and hence Waynflete not only made many friendships, but he kept them all unbroken. His list of friends includes many names besides those enumerated above. Amongst them were the great Lord Fortescue, author of the noblest treatise on "the laws of England" ever written, and Lord Cromwell, the pious founder of the college and almshouse of Tateshall and of the church at Rawby. He was a faithful servant of Henry VI., and for many years filled the office of lord high treasurer; a circumstance which explains the little purses carved over his buildings; while his intimacy with Waynflete was long commemorated by the arms of that prelate, which he caused to be inserted into the windows of his church and carved over the portico. Another of Waynflete's illustrious friends was the old hero Sir John Fastolfe, who had been wounded at Agincourt, and was a brother in arms of Sir William Brereton. He was a great benefactor to the new foundation at Oxford; and when he died, Waynflete became, as we read, "the best friend to his soul," by the obits and masses which he provided for him.

It is probable that the buildings of Magdalen College would now have been commenced without further delay but for fresh troubles in the state. The great reconciliation of the 25th of March had been, to use the words of Fabyan, but "a dissimulated love-day;" and a miserable fray between the retainers of the queen and those of the Earl of Warwick brought on a fresh rupture. The Yorkist nobles flew to arms to avenge the fancied insult; and the sword once drawn, was destined never to be sheathed till

the soil of England had been watered by the blood of a hundred thousand men.

Margaret of Anjou was at this time the governing sovereign of England. Determined to vindicate her husband's authority with spirit and vigour, she took him on a royal progress through the western counties; and wherever they appeared, the little prince, then a beautiful fair-haired boy of six years old, distributed silver swans, to be worn as his badge by those who came to offer homage to his father. The sight of their holy and innocent sovereign, the spirited appeals of his queen, and the winning ways of the royal child, so roused the devotion of the loyal west-countrymen, that no fewer than ten thousand men of Cheshire alone marched to Bloreheath, with the red rose in their bonnets and the silver swans upon their breasts. Defeated at Bloreheath, the royal army was victorious at Ludlow, where the Yorkists were forced to fly without striking a blow, in consequence of the desertion of a body of veteran troops, who refused to turn their arms against the sovereign to whom they had sworn allegiance. York took refuge in Ireland, whilst the Earl of Warwick fled to Calais, and Henry returned to Coventry to enjoy the momentary triumph of his arms. A parliament was called, which met in the chapter-house of St. Mary's priory, and was opened by a speech from Waynflete, who "made a notable declaration" why they had been summoned, his text on the occasion being the words, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you." A new oath of allegiance was administered to all the lords present by the chancellor, and attainders were passed against the Yorkist leaders, whilst a general amnesty was granted to those who had joined their standards. Henry's holy and gentle nature revolted at the passing of these attainders; and before giving his assent, he insisted on a clause being inserted, which would give him the power of dispensing with them whenever he thought proper; while he refused altogether to include in the bills three unfortunate lords who had thrown themselves on his mercy, and to whom he had promised his protection.

But the Lancastrian triumph was a very short one. In the July of the following year, Warwick returned from

Calais at the head of twenty thousand men. In company with Edward, the young Earl of March, eldest son of the Duke of York, he advanced to meet the king near Northampton; and sent a herald demanding a conference, which was sternly refused. This, which was probably the result of the queen's advice, would seem to have been opposed to the gentler policy of Waynflete. Devoted heart and soul as he was to the cause of his sovereign, he yet constantly advocated moderation, and refused to give his countenance to measures the only effect of which was to render hopeless all chance of reconciliation. He therefore resolved on resigning his office; and on the 7th of July 1460 he accordingly waited on the king in his tent, at Hardinston near Northampton, and there delivered up to him the great silver seal. A full and free pardon for all misdemeanours which he might have committed during his term of office had been made out for him earlier in the day; and Waynflete rejoiced to find himself relieved from political duties, which suited ill with his devout and retiring character. Yet he had his cross to bear at this juncture. His resignation at a moment so critical to his party exposed him to much calumny and censure from some of the hot-headed Lancastrian nobles. They represented that he was moved by a secret disloyalty to Henry, and that he was balancing between the two parties, prepared to join with either that might prove successful. Waynflete's tender and affectionate heart deeply felt these imputations; but he was comforted by the assurance that Henry at least understood and appreciated his motives. Of this we have a touching proof in the letter which the king addressed to Pope Pius II. a few months later, when fortune had once more turned against him, and left him a crownless prisoner in the hands of the Yorkist chief. Spite of his own misfortunes, he found time to think of his faithful servant; and his letter, written with his own hand, bears witness to the fidelity of his favourite prelate, whom he acquits of all blame, whilst he speaks in affectionate terms of his tried service and loyalty. This document is valuable both on account of the evidence it affords of Waynflete's virtues, his devotion to the Holy See, his spotless integrity, and the favour he enjoyed



"among all good and honest men in the kingdom, whether of high or low estate," and as an example of that thoughtful kindness of heart which ever distinguished the writer. Gladly would he have followed his chancellor's example, and with him have retired from a contest which wearied and vexed his gentle spirit; and often may we suppose him exclaiming, in the words which Shakespeare has put in his mouth:

"To whom God wills, there be the victory! . . .  
Would I were dead, if God's good will were so:  
For what is in the world but grief and woe?  
Ah me! methinks it were a happy life  
To be no better than a homely swain,  
To sit upon a hill as I do now  
And carve out dials quaintly. . . .  
So many minutes, days, weeks, months, and years,  
Passed over to the end they were created,  
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet end."

But the only quiet in store for Henry was that of wearisome captivity. Three days after Waynflete's resignation the battle of Northampton was fought, and lost to the house of Lancaster. The queen fled to the north, taking with her the young prince; but Henry fell into the hands of the duke, and was by him carried to London, where a parliament was soon afterwards called, and in presence of the conqueror and his victorious troops, was easily induced to acknowledge him once more as Protector of the realm of England.

A hollow compromise was then agreed to; Henry was to reign during his lifetime, and at his death the crown was to pass to Richard and his heirs. This might have done well enough had Henry been childless; but it was a plan by which the rights of his own son were passed over, and the proud spirit of Margaret of Anjou spurned the thought of sacrifice. Collecting an army in the northern counties, she advanced with the prince as far as Wakefield, and there gave battle to the duke, who was left dead on the field with two thousand of his followers. But this victory was far from terminating the contest; and Edward, the young Earl of March, to whom the Yorkist claims had now descended, proved even a more dangerous anta-

gonist than his father. Battle after battle followed, with varying fortunes, and always with an increased character of ferocity. At last, on the Palm Sunday of 1461, which was that day to be celebrated, in the words of an old chronicler, "not with palms, but with lances," a hundred and twenty thousand men met under the rival banners on the field of Towton. The Lancastrians were led on by the brave but cruel Clifford; whilst Edward commanded his army in person.

The slaughter of that day has no parallel in the English annals. For ten hours the dreadful conflict raged without the victory seeming to declare itself for either party; but at last Clifford fell, and his followers losing heart, fled, "like men amazed," towards the bridge of Tadcaster. It was in the midst of a wild snow-storm that they attempted to cross the swollen waters of the river Wharfe, whilst Edward and his victorious troops hotly pursued them. Falling on their flying enemies, they massacred them by thousands, till their bodies formed a mound across the river, whose tide was crimsoned with their blood.

"Then," says Hall, "was seen the son fighting against the father, the brother against the brother, the uncle against the nephew, the tenant against his lord." Then

"The Wharfe ran red with slaughter,  
Gathering in its guilty flood  
The carnage and the ill-spilt blood  
That forty thousand lives could yield."

The red rose of Lancaster was stricken hopelessly to the ground. Henry and his queen fled to the Scottish border; whilst Edward hastened to London, where he was crowned king, on St. Peter's day, by the title of Edward IV., and solemnly acknowledged by the parliament. On that day the reign of Henry VI. may virtually be said to have ended. The savage conqueror in his first parliament demanded and obtained such a bill of attainder as was probably never passed before or since; including the king, with his queen and the infant prince, and every Lancastrian noble of any distinction, together with one hundred and thirty-eight knights, priests, and esquires; all of whom were adjudged liable to the penalties of high

treason, whenever they might be taken. Then followed four years during which the holy king, who had never forfeited his crown by one deed of cruelty or injustice, was a houseless wanderer in the wilds of Westmoreland; and at last the July of 1465 saw him brought a prisoner to London, when, after being thrice led round the pillory, and exposed to the insults of Warwick's soldiers, he was committed to close confinement in the Tower.

It may easily be imagined that Waynflete came in for some share of the ruthless persecution which was waged by the new king against every adherent of the house of Lancaster. Leland tells us that he was "in great *dedignation* with King Edward, and fled for fere of him into secrete corners; but at last was restored to his goodes and the kinge's favour." It is certain that, though he never wavered in his constant fidelity to his old master, he yet submitted to the new dynasty; and, withdrawing altogether from politics, applied himself uninterruptedly to the discharge of his episcopal functions. His prudence and moderation seem at last even to have won Edward's confidence; and in 1462 we find a royal charter issued, by which the privileges of his see were confirmed to him and his successors. This was followed a few years later by the grant of an ample pardon for all crimes, transgressions, and misdemeanours which he might have committed, the king, as it is said, "having regard to the manifest good deserts of the Bishop, whom he has found trustworthy, and accepts as his true liegeman, receiving him moreover with special favour." Yet the liegeman of Edward never lost the love and friendship of Henry, whom he is said often to have visited in his prison, where the pious captive found his best solace in prayer and meditation. Some verses and a few sentences written by him on scraps of paper, and given to a knight who had the care of him, remain as memorials of Henry's tranquil resignation. "Patience," he writes, "is the armour and the conquest of the godly:" and so he found it; and, in his neglected prison-cell, by patience and quiet suffering he overcame the world.

## CHAPTER VI.

Threatened ruin of the Eton foundation. Waynflete's benefactions to the college. Brief restoration of King Henry. Waynflete crowns him in London. Return of Edward. Barnet and Tewkesbury. Murder of Prince Edward; and of Henry VI. His funeral. Honours paid to his memory. Waynflete's sorrow. He is kindly received by Edward IV. The Windsor festival. Waynflete proceeds with his foundation at Oxford.

THE royal foundations of Eton and Cambridge had now lost their founder's care, and had passed into the hands of one who was by no means disposed to charge himself with the expense of their completion. The fact of their having been the favourite institutions of the dethroned monarch gained them little favour in the eyes of Edward IV. Almost his first act on coming to the throne was to replenish his empty exchequer by seizing some of the endowments of Eton; and in the year following his accession he obtained a bull from the Pope for dissolving the college altogether, and merging it into the royal establishment at Windsor. His designs, however, were frustrated by the bold and courageous conduct of Provost Westbury, who solemnly protested against this act of injustice, and carried his appeal to Rome. His exertions were made with so much spirit and prudence, that the bull was revoked; and the king found himself obliged to restore certain lands and movable goods which he had appropriated to his own use. Eton was thus saved from destruction; but it was never completed according to the magnificent design of its founder, and had to struggle against many difficulties, until the accession of Henry VII. brought it once more into favour at court. Deprived of royal support and patronage, it found, however, a true and constant friend in Bishop Waynflete. He loved it for its connection with his own happiest days, and yet more for the sake of its unfortunate founder; and though his own colleges might seem to have had a prior claim on him, he continued through his life to be a generous benefactor to Eton. Leland tells us that "a good parte of the buildyngs of Eton colledge accrued by meanes and at the expense of Waynflete; for he was a very great favourer of the worke begonne by

King Henry, but left very onperfect and raully." The five years that followed the capture of Henry were spent by Waynflete in the quiet discharge of his episcopal functions. Whilst he held office as chancellor, he had appointed William Bishop of Sidon, an Augustinian canon, to act as his coadjutor; but he now returned to Winchester, where he held frequent ordinations, and showed himself active in restoring discipline among the various religious houses, especially at the monastery of St. Peter's at Hyde.

But the year 1470 witnessed a fresh revolution. Warwick the Kingmaker, whose power had set the crown on the head of the Yorkist prince, was now in arms against him. Aggrieved by an insult from the king, who owed him every thing, he hastened to France, where Queen Margaret had taken refuge with her son, and offered to return to his allegiance, and restore King Henry to his throne. Edward's own brother, the Duke of Clarence, joined the league; and both of them swore on the true cross to be true and faithful, "without change," to the cause of Henry, and to serve him as subjects to their sovereign lord. This strange alliance was cemented by a marriage between the Lady Anne of Warwick and the young Prince Edward, then in his eighteenth year, whom the historians of the day describe as "seemly in stature, beautiful in face, and by nature abhorring all manners of vice, as well of the body as of the soul." Waynflete had been his sponsor in Confirmation and his tutor in childhood, whilst the great and good Lord Fortescue had watched over his education; and the house of Lancaster had reason to regard its young representative as one whose future career was full of hope and promise. Warwick and Clarence returned to England immediately after the marriage; and such was the influence attaching to the very name of the dreaded Kingmaker, that eleven days after his landing Edward found himself driven from his throne. Warwick entered London without opposition; and releasing Henry from the Tower, conducted him in solemn procession to St. Paul's, wearing the royal diadem on his head, whilst the citizens saluted him on all sides by cries of "Long live King Henry!"



Waynflete was summoned to London to greet his royal master, and to perform the ceremony of his second coronation, which took place on the 13th of October. A parliament was called, which, without the smallest hesitation, passed an attainder against Edward as a traitor and usurper. The restoration was unstained by deeds of violence and bloodshed; for Henry's gentle influence so far prevailed, that none of the Yorkist nobles were attainted or any way molested, with the exception of "the butcher Earl of Worcester," who expiated his unnumbered brutalities on the scaffold. The fair hopes of the Lancastrians were, however, doomed to bitter disappointment. At the first approach of Warwick, Edward had fled to Holland, without making a struggle or striking a single blow in defence of his crown. But the March of the following year saw him once more in England, at the head of a powerful army. At first he protested that he came but to recover his father's lands and inheritance; he every where caused King Henry to be proclaimed, swore on the Blessed Sacrament to serve him as his liege subject, and wore in his helmet an ostrich feather, the chosen badge of the young Prince of Wales. But all this was only a feint to mask his real intentions. As he marched on to London, the feudal tenants of the house of York once more mustered round his standard. Clarence, doubly false and perjured, now deserted Henry and joined his brother's army, soliciting Warwick to do the same. But the last and greatest of the old English barons, whatever were his faults, scorned to be a traitor to his plighted word. He had bound himself to Henry by an oath which he would not break. "Go back to your master," he said to the messenger of Clarence, "and tell him that Warwick, true to his word, is a better man than the false and perjured Clarence."

The armies of the two leaders met on Barnet field. For some hours the victory seemed doubtful; but at last the great Kingmaker fell, and with him sunk the last hopes of Lancaster. Edward entered London in triumph; and Henry, after a brief six months of liberty, returned to his old dungeon in the Tower. But on the very day of

the overthrow of Warwick, Margaret and her son, who had hitherto been prevented by the stormy weather from crossing the Channel, landed on the coast of Dorsetshire, and marched, with such forces as they could assemble, in the direction of the western counties.

There are some localities in England which have been rendered historical by a succession of great events, which throw around them their combined and melancholy interest. Among these is that broad and beautiful valley of the Severn, whose richness and varied beauty has earned for it the title of the Garden of England. Thrice has this island been torn by the contention of civil war, and each time has the final struggle taken place on almost the same ground. The traveller who climbs the Malvern Hills must be struck, as he gazes at the scene which lies below him, with its peaceful and fertile aspect. Far as his eye can reach, it wanders over fields and gardens and blooming orchards, among which he traces the silvery line of the river, or marks the churches and villages clustering amid the trees. The very sounds that greet his ear all breathe of peace,—the lowing of the cattle on those rich pastures, or the hum of the bees among the wild flowers that bloom around him. Yet, as his glance sweeps the eastern horizon, it rests on fields, within a few hours' ride of one another, which have been marked by three of the bloodiest struggles in his country's annals. Before him lies the vale of Evesham; and among the blossoming pear-trees he may see the tower of the abbey where the brave Earl Simon de Montfort heard Mass on the morning before his last struggle with Edward Plantagenet. To the left another tower rises: it is that of Worcester Cathedral; and near it a little wood marks the spot where Cromwell's troops encamped on the night before the fight of Worcester. But neither Worcester nor Evesham witnessed scenes one half so sad and dismal as those whose memory is indelibly associated with another spot in this broad landscape. Turn to the right, and see in the blue distance another tower still, which you can just discern as your eye follows the southern windings of the stream. There stands the Abbey of Tewkesbury; and there was the red rose of

Lancaster steeped in blood on the fatal morning of the 4th of May. It was a massacre rather than a battle; the Lancastrians were disheartened and without an able leader, and a few hours decided the triumph of Edward of York. The young prince, who had fought with spirit and gallantry, was taken prisoner and conducted to King Edward's tent, whence he was soon dragged to be despatched by the ready daggers of the Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence. Somerset and the other leaders of his party, after taking refuge in the abbey-church, were massacred in cold blood, in violation of the sacred laws of sanctuary; and Margaret of Anjou was conducted to London by the murderers of her son, and committed to close imprisonment in the Tower.

But the tragedy had not even yet ended. The very same night that Edward entered the capital in triumph, between eleven and twelve o'clock, King Henry VI. was put to death; "the Duke of Gloucester and divers of his men," says Leland, "being in the Tower that night." "May God give him time for repentance, whoever he was," adds the Monk of Croyland, "who laid his sacrilegious hands on the Lord's anointed." His murderers endeavoured to conceal their crime by giving out that he had died of grief—"out of pure displeasure and melancholy" at the ruin of his party and the death of his son. But at the same time, to prevent all doubt as to the *fact* of his death, they caused his body to be exposed to the public view. It was borne, with face uncovered, on a bier surrounded by guards, through Cheapside to St. Paul's, that every man might see it; but the silent witness of his blood, which welled through his open wounds, gave an undoubted token of the violent manner of his death. From St. Paul's it was borne to Blackfriars; "and there," says Stowe, "it bled again." Our readers will remember how powerfully Shakespeare has seized this circumstance, which is mentioned by all the historians of the time. It was one which made a profound impression on the populace; for, according to a very general belief in those times, it was looked on as a sign that the dead man had been slain by the hands of an assassin. Fearless of the vengeance of the Yorkist princes.

the people gathered about the bier, and loudly proclaimed the dead king to have been both saint and martyr. That same evening the bloody coffin was placed in a barge surrounded by torches, and guarded by foreign soldiers; "and so, without saying or singing," continues the historian, "it was conveyed up the dark waters of the Thames at midnight to his silent obsequies at Chertsey Abbey, where it was long pretended that miracles were wrought at his tomb." The fame of these miracles, and the crowds of pilgrims attracted by them to the spot, in after years excited the jealousy of Richard of Gloucester; who, on his accession to the throne, caused the remains of his victim to be removed to Windsor, and buried at the south door of the choir. The spot where he was laid was close to the magnificent tomb of Edward IV. This circumstance struck the imagination of Pope, and inspired his well-known lines :

" Let softest strains ill-fated Henry mourn,  
And palms eternal flourish o'er his urn.  
Here o'er the martyr-king the marble weeps,  
And close beside him once-fear'd Edward sleeps;  
The grave unites, where e'en the dead find rest,  
And blended lie th' oppressor and th' oppressed."

It was indeed fitting that the ashes of the murdered king should lie, as it were, within sight of the spires of Eton, "where grateful science still reveres her Henry's holy shade." Perhaps it was this nearness to scenes where his memory was so dearly cherished that kept alive that very devotion which Richard had hoped to extinguish. Certain it is, that so far from the throng of pilgrims diminishing, they daily increased; and Stowe tells us that he was "*worshiped*" at Windsor under the title of Holy Henry," and that his red-velvet hat, which was there preserved as a relic, was thought to heal the headaches of those who put it on their heads. There is, of course, no means now of determining the truth of the alleged miracles, though they are very formally spoken of in a letter addressed to Pope Alexander VI. by King Henry VII., wherein he solicits permission to remove the sacred relics from Windsor to his newly-built chapel in Westminster

Abbey, which was accordingly done in the year 1501. It would appear as though it had been in contemplation at this time to take some steps towards procuring his beatification,\* though such a design was of course interrupted by the religious revolution which so quickly followed. It is certain that his tomb, both at Chertsey and Windsor, was regarded as a shrine by the common people; and Harpsfield tells us that many a votive offering might be seen suspended over it, such as crutches, or little waxen figures of eyes, arms, and legs, in memory of the cures piously believed to have been obtained through his intercession.

Among all who mourned his death, there was none who felt it with more bitterness than the Bishop of Winchester. In Heylin's quaint old poem, entitled "Wainflet's Memorial," he mourns the death of Henry in a hundred and sixty stanzas of heroic verse; wherein he represents all England as horror-struck at the crime:

"But above all, Wainflet the heavens did teare  
With dolorous complayntes: he had no mate  
Equall to him in greefe."

In fact, the friendship which had bound him to his royal master was so well known, and of so close a kind, that men seem to have felt his sorrow as calling for their peculiar sympathy. The very elements seemed to share

\* This is the only explanation that we can suggest of the assertion made by the continuers of Dugdale to the effect that he was actually canonised about the year 1500. Some introductory form must have been gone through, on which occasion the abbot and convent of Westminster petitioned the king to procure the removal of the remains from Windsor; and in 1501 it appears that they did actually remove them. The poet Gray, who, as an old Etonian, always preserved a great veneration for the memory of "Holy Henry," in a note to his poem of "The Bard," says that "he was very near being canonised," in allusion, we presume, to the above circumstances. Whatever stage the process may have reached, it was of course abandoned in the religious revolution of the following reign. Pope was probably not aware of this *second* removal of the royal remains, but wrote under the impression that they still reposed at Windsor. The exact spot where they lie in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey cannot, however, be pointed out, as no monument was raised over them.



in the universal horror excited by the late events; for we find repeated notices of the "malignant airs," threatening mortality and pestilence, which at this time added to the sufferings of the unhappy English. Waynflete hesitated not to declare that these visitations were in punishment of the sins of the nation; and again ordered processions and litanies throughout his diocese, to avert the anger of God, and to obtain the grace of true contrition.

During the short period of Henry's restoration, the Bishop of Winchester had not shrunk from taking a decided part in public affairs: he himself had, as we have stated, performed the ceremony of the king's second coronation; and now, when Edward was once more firmly seated on his throne, it seemed scarcely to be hoped that one who had so openly evinced his loyalty to the house of Lancaster should escape vengeance. But, so far from including him in the list of Lancastrian nobles who were persecuted by attainders and proscription, Edward hastened, soon after the battle of Tewkesbury, to grant him a full and free pardon; alleging as his motive for so doing the many past services rendered to him by the Bishop. Such indulgence certainly deserved a corresponding degree of gratitude; and accordingly, a few years later, we find Waynflete attending with the other lords spiritual and temporal, who were summoned by Edward IV., in the July of 1471, to take an oath of fealty to the infant Prince of Wales, who had been born in the sanctuary of Westminster during the time of Edward's flight and dethronement. In the following year we find him officiating, as the Pope's representative, at the solemn delivery of the Cardinal's hat to Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury. This ceremony took place at Lambeth; the Mass of the Holy Ghost being first celebrated by Waynflete, who then placed the red hat on the head of the new Cardinal.

The four years that followed were years of peace, during which Waynflete was occupied in the discharge of his pastoral functions. The country enjoyed a period of repose after the frightful convulsions with which it had been so long agitated; and Edward, whose power was now firmly consolidated, found leisure to indulge his taste by a

splendid revival of those scenes which had been witnessed at Windsor under the rule of his great namesake King Edward III. Utterly deficient as he was in all the true elements of the chivalric character, perjured in faith, stained with the blood of helpless prisoners, a violator of holy sanctuaries, and so wanting in all sentiments of religious reverence that he had seized the jewelled mitre of the Archbishop of York, and fashioned it into a royal crown for his own wearing,—Edward of York had yet a taste for all that was showy and magnificent in the ceremonial of chivalry. And so, though the honour, the faith, and the self-devotion of the Christian knight were all wanting, King Edward's mind was full of plans for the revival of knightly pageants. He resolved on a grand restoration of the Order of the Garter, and the feast of St. George. 1476 was fixed for the celebration of a festival which was to surpass even those at which Wykeham had assisted, when the hero of Crecy and his gallant son had gathered round them the chivalry of Europe to inaugurate the re-establishment of King Arthur's round table.

Waynflete, who, as Bishop of Winchester, held the office of prelate of the order, was of course summoned to take his share in the gorgeous ceremonial. The scene in which it took place was St. George's Chapel, Windsor, whose choir had just been completed, and was chiefly the work of that most chivalric of ecclesiastics Richard Beauchamp Bishop of Salisbury, who, "out of mere love to the order," had drawn all the designs for the choir with his own hand, and worked hard in the character of master of the works, "daily attending to observe the progress of the goodly structure." Possibly a love of florid Gothic had something to do with Waynflete's presence on this occasion. Beauchamp and he were of one mind on the subject of architecture; and the glorious fan-work of St. George's roof was a spectacle on which the eyes of so genuine a Wykehamist as he was must have gazed with unmingled satisfaction.

Let our readers, then, imagine the good prelate officiating at the altar, and celebrating the office in honour of the holy martyr and good knight St. George in the presence

of the noble and princely throng. Let them picture to themselves the sovereign surrounded by his knights, all dressed in their robes of blue velvet, riding in gallant trim from the castle to the chapter-house, and thence proceeding on foot to the choir, where, when each was seated in his own stall, above which hung his arms and his emblazoned banner, the first Vespers of the feast were solemnly celebrated. Early next morning, which fell on a Sunday, the knights again assembled in choir to assist at Matins; and then, after breakfast, came the High Mass for the day, which was sung by Waynflete,—the queen, with all her ladies, wearing also the insignia of the order, being present in the rood-loft. On Monday the knights each made their accustomed offerings: the king presented a rich suit of vestments, with “certain copes” to match; the Marquis of Dorset and the Duke of Suffolk brought the appropriate offering of the sword which had belonged to Mowbray Duke of Norfolk. The last of a long line of heroes, he had left his honours and his wealth to a daughter, the lady Anne, whom Edward had already chosen for the wife of his second son, Richard Duke of York. Both of them were children, but their espousals were celebrated the next year; and thus the enormous inheritance of the Mowbrays passed into the hands of the house of York. Then followed two other knights with the plumed helmet of the duke; and to them succeeded a goodly train of earls and barons, some with plate and jewels, and some with broad gold pieces, all to be devoted to the adornment of St. George's Sanctuary.

It was a dazzling and brilliant spectacle, yet one on which Waynflete must have gazed with mingled feelings. He could not have forgotten that Windsor was being endowed out of the ruins of Eton; and his heart must have wandered back to memories of happy days long past, when, as provost of the Royal college, he first tasted the sweets of friendship with one whom none but he seemed even to remember. But if there were moments when, amid the swelling chant and tossing censers, he saw in thought the silent tomb of Chertsey Abbey, or the cell in the Tower where “the fair daisy-flower of Anjou,” she who once had

shed such a grace on every courtly festival, was now growing gray in broken-hearted captivity, with others it was not so : and as the gallant train rode back after Vespers to the banquet at the castle, the April sun shone upon a merry multitude, who shouted "Largesse!" to the new-made knights, and proclaimed the St. George's festival as the grandest and most magnificent that England had witnessed for full a hundred years.

From what we have said, it will appear evident that Waynflete held the same distinguished position under Edward IV. that he had done under his predecessor. He appears to have felt, and felt truly, that the duty of a Bishop in those unquiet times was to be the father of his people, and as such, to protect them from the sufferings to which they were exposed by the contentions of the rival parties. He would have forfeited all power of doing this had he offered a vexatious opposition to the reigning dynasty ; and hence we find him occupying the very singular position of a prelate high in favour with the Yorkist monarch, whose court and councils he frequently attended, and at the same time openly looked up to by the Lancastrians as the firmest friend whom the late king had ever possessed, and a Lancastrian in all his principles and sympathies. Other prelates who had adhered like him to the party of the Red Rose were imprisoned, exiled, or attainted ; but Waynflete received more than one proof of Edward's confidence, whilst his less fortunate colleagues never on that account charged him with servility or time-serving. We are therefore forced to conclude, in the words of his biographer Chandler, that it was "the natural mildness of his disposition which had withheld him from taking a more bold and active part, and that his subsequent security was the result of a character wherein the virtues of the truly Christian Bishop were unmixed and unsullied with the ferocity of the warrior, or the turbulence of the political partisan."

Trying and painful as his position had been, and unavoidably mixed up with the state politics of a most distracted period, Waynflete had never entirely discontinued his pastoral duties. We find notices of his holding no less than four ordinations in the year following his appointment

as chancellor; and in the midst of his other labours, he may be said to have effected a reform in all the conventual houses of his diocese. Selborne Priory was now at last suppressed, after repeated efforts to restore its religious discipline, and even when forced to discontinue his personal visitations, Waynflete continued to conduct the work of reform which lay so near his heart by commissions for three years, whose proceedings he carefully superintended, as in the case before alluded to of Hyde Abbey, whose abbot was now deposed, and pensioned in the Priory of Boxgrove, Sussex.

It remains for us now to consider the progress of that foundation which was, indeed, his great and favourite work, and to the perfecting of which he once more patiently applied himself, in spite of obstacles and delays which would have daunted the resolution of any other man.

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## CHAPTER VII.

Magdalen College. Contemplative features of the English character. Letter from the University of Oxford. Waynflete assists them in building their divinity schools. Completion of Magdalen. Its plan. Its statutes. King Edward's visit to the college. Course of studies established by Waynflete. Daily rule of life among the students. Their devotions. Their dress. Dissensions among the fellows. Waynflete's letter of advice.

THE traveller who has entered Oxford from the eastern road will not easily forget the first sight of that majestic tower which rises just beyond the bridge, marking the site of what Wood calls "the noblest and richest structure in the learned world." If his admiration induce him to examine more closely the building to which it belongs, we think he will join in the enthusiasm with which the simple-hearted old antiquary extols its lofty pinnacles and turrets, its stately towers, its tunable and melodious peal of bells, its groves and gardens and waterworks, "as delectable as the banks of Eurotas, shaded with bay-trees, where Apollo himself was wont to walk and sing his lays." In fact



Magdalen College is beyond comparison the finest collegiate building in England ; and when we have said that, we have implied that it is the noblest in the world. Nowhere did the collegiate system take such deep root as in our own country ; and nowhere did it take an exactly similar form, or find a similar expression. These homes of mingled prayer and study harmonised with a tone of mind preëminently English, the pensive tenderness of which has left its stamp alike upon our literature and our art. Milton, when he wrote his *Penneroso*, involuntarily found himself wishing that his

... "due feet might never fail  
To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
And love the high embowèd roof,  
With antique pillars massy proof,  
And storied windows richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light."

As a Puritan, his sympathies could have been but little in harmony with the associations attaching to such scenes ; but, as a poet and scholar, he felt their bewitching charm, and was forced to own that the old cloisters of Catholic England were the fittest homes for men of meditative mood.

In this amiable inconsistency he is joined by another great Protestant poet. Spenser, who wrote during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in the very poem wherein he professes to offer his homage to the apostate queen, is perpetually using Catholic imagery whenever he falls into a contemplative strain ; witness the exquisite lines in which he depicts the forest hermitage, with its little lowly chapel, "far from resort of men :

"Wherein the hermit duly went to say  
His holy things each morn and eventide ;  
Thereby a crystal stream did gently play,  
Which from a sacred fountain wellèd forth alway."

Images like these are always delightful to English taste, even when in many respects it has become protestantised and perverted ; but in former times the spirit which they breathed was essentially characteristic of our countrymen. With them study and religious contemplation seem ever to have gone hand in hand ; their greatest scholars were men

of prayer, and their men of prayer were almost always students. There is, too, an inherent love of beauty in the English mind, which mingled with this half-religious and half-studious spirit, and caught from it a distinctive character; and before the tie was broken which bound the imagination to the religious feelings, this sense of the beautiful freely poured itself out over the sanctuaries which Catholic piety multiplied through the land.

This was essentially the cast of Waynflete's own mind, of which the College of Magdalen is as perfect a reflection as a poem is of the mind of its author. It was *his* poem, the cherished thought of his lifetime, the realisation of his boyish dreams, wherein were depicted glorious cloisters, peopled by a race of men clad in russet gowns, half monks, half scholars, and with "a passing grete love of bokes." He was an old man before he was able to begin his work; yet the vision was as fresh and beautiful as ever in his mind's eye, and he made it reality. All through the wars and convulsions of the six-and-twenty years which had elapsed since he received the mitre, he had kept an anxious eye upon his Oxford foundation, had enlarged its endowments, and taken every security in his power for their preservation; and now, when peace was at last restored, he determined to delay no longer, and gave orders for the commencement of the college buildings. He did not lay the first stone with his own hands, but deputed Tybarde, the venerable president of his society, to perform that ceremony for him, which he did on the 5th of May 1473. The stone was placed exactly on the spot afterwards to be covered by the high altar of the chapel, and was blessed by Robert Doby, Bishop of St. David's, who performed the ceremony "adorned in his pontificals." It would seem that not a little difficulty existed at that time in procuring "cunning workmen" capable of executing the designs of the pious architect; not, indeed, from any lack of such artisans in England, but from the simple fact that all the most skilful stonemasons of the realm were engaged on the sumptuous works still in progress at Windsor, over the completion of which Waynflete now presided. We do not know by what powers of persuasion the Bishop prevailed

on King Edward to grant him some of his men; but certain it is that two years later, when the authorities of the university were about to erect their divinity schools, they found themselves unable to proceed for want of stonemasons, and addressed a very piteous petition to the king, wherein they besought him, for the glory of God, to come to their aid; not, indeed, as they humbly added, that they dared ask for any of *his* men, seeing the ardour with which he was engaged in the erection of his own holy fabric, but, inasmuch as he had granted stonemasons to the Bishop of Winchester, they did but beseech the king for permission to use as many of them as they could persuade the Bishop to spare them. It was what we may call a cool request; but Waynflete loved the university too well to return a refusal, and some of his stonemasons were accordingly sent to work at the divinity schools. Their success encouraged the chancellor and regents to try the effect of a little more judicious begging, and their next request was for the use of the "building machines" which he had prepared for his college. Their letter is a model in its way. It begins by an acknowledgment of the great benefits already received, and goes on to quote Cicero, who, they observe, notes it as the mark of a noble and ingenuous mind, "to whom one owes much to be willing to owe more," adding, that they were in very sore distress for their machines, and that the remedy was in his power to apply, by consenting to their humble request. Who could have the heart to reject a petition which appealed to the authority of Cicero? Not Waynflete, at any rate; he sent them his scaffolds as well as his masons, and the result was that the divinity schools were completed with extraordinary expedition.\* Their beautiful roof may still be seen; defaced, indeed, by the

\* This was not the only application made to Waynflete by the authorities of the university. About the same time we find them referring to his arbitration an obstinate lawsuit which was being carried on between Dr. Gilbert Haydock and Mr. Thomas Daviss, the latter a person of the Bishop's household. In their letter they appear at a loss for epithets sufficiently respectful; they style him "most magnificent, most constant, and most humane," and return him "immortal thanks," as one who has shown them friendliness beyond any other person of the age.

sacrileges of the reign of Edward VI., when the glorious windows, then rich with the figures of the saints and fathers of the Church, and emblazoned with the arms of more than a hundred benefactors, were all broken, the lead which covered the roof was stripped off, and a cattle-pound erected close to the deserted building, whose half-ruined walls were soon covered with thorns and nettles. The mischief was increased, rather than diminished, by the restorations of Sir Christopher Wren; yet the Catholic eye still detects, in the richly carved pendants, the familiar images of Mary and her Divine Son.

By 1480 the college buildings were sufficiently advanced for the society to take possession of them; though, the chapel being still unfinished, they were obliged to use the old oratory of the hospital for their choir services. Many additions and alterations have been made since the time of the founder; yet, in all essential particulars, Magdalen College remains as he originally designed it. The noble quadrangle, surrounded by its cloisters, is flanked on the southern side by the chapel, whose roof rises conspicuously above those of the surrounding buildings, its western front joining the grand gateway which forms the principal entrance to the college. This gateway is adorned by four sculptured figures in canopied niches, representing King Henry III., the founder of the ancient hospital, with St. John Baptist as his patron saint, and Waynflete, the founder of the college, with his favourite patroness St. Mary Magdalen. These figures are repeated over the western door of the chapel, with the addition of the glorious confessor St. Swithin, who, with the other patron saints of Winchester, is included in the dedication; while St. Mary Magdalen fills the central niche, and Waynflete is represented humbly kneeling in prayer, with Wykeham on his right hand. On either side of the chapel-door, near the cloisters, appears an angel, bearing a scroll, on one of which, in curious antique letters, we read the founder's motto, *Fecit mihi magna qui potens est*; and on the other the words, *Hic est domus Dei, et porta cæli*.\* The pre-

\* "He that is mighty hath done to me great things." "This is the house of God and the gate of heaven."

sent state of the chapel gives us, of course, no idea of its appearance four centuries ago, when it was enriched with statues, carvings, and painted windows in rich profusion. A stone reredos of extraordinary beauty rose behind the high altar, in which appeared figures of all the patron saints of the college, under carved canopies of the most exquisite workmanship. An image of St. Mary Magdalen appears to have held the most conspicuous place, and we find mention in the register of oblations made to it. The altar-furniture was of the costliest kind, and in particular the relics\* and reliquaries seem to have been of singular value, including several of the true cross, enclosed in gold and crystal cases, and enriched with precious stones. Besides these, we read of the "chalices, and all sorts of sacred utensils, valuable for their materials and curious workmanship;" of the "copes and sacerdotal vestments, some of velvet, damask, and gold tissue, of various colours, decorated with pearls, and embroidered, some with the arms of Waynflete, some with lilies and other flowers, with birds, animals, and devices, with images representing angels and saints, the crucifixion and scriptural stories; besides canopies, curtains, banners, streamers, linen," and other articles in great abundance, for the use of the high altar and the other altars in the body of the chapel, of which there were six, in addition to the private chapel of the president. There was, moreover, a rich supply of choral books, some very richly ornamented; whilst in the inventories of these treasures we find also notices of "fine enamelled tablets, with most subtle sculptures in ebony of the Passion of our Lord," and other like curiosities of sacred art. The tower, of which we shall speak in another place, though included in the founder's original design, was not erected until a later period; but the hall, chapel, cloisters, and library, were all finished during Waynflete's lifetime. "The founder's chamber," as it is called, is situated over the great gateway; and until lately the "founder's oratory" likewise remained, in the south-west corner of the cloistered quadrangle.

\* At the time of the Reformation, Wood tells us that these relics were all "trampled under foot."



The completion of the college buildings was followed by the resignation of the venerable president Tybarde, who had governed the society with extraordinary prudence for the space of one-and-twenty years. He was literally worn out with age and labours, and his death took place only three months after the installation of his successor. Tybarde was buried in the middle of the inner chapel, where a monumental brass, now destroyed, represented him lying with his hands clasped in prayer, with an epitaph in Latin verse. His memory was most deservedly respected by the society; and in the inventory of sacred vestments we find mention of a cope, the orphreys of which were embroidered with the inscription, *Orate pro anima Magistri Tybarte*.

Tybarde, as we have before mentioned, had governed the college without the help of any statutes; but Waynflete had now completed a body of laws, framed, like those of King Henry's colleges, on the admirable models left by Wykeham; and these he sent by the hands of Master Richard Mayew, a fellow of New College, whom he had chosen to succeed the venerable Tybarde. Mayew arrived on the 23d of August 1480, and was received "with all love, honour, and respect" by Tybarde, who at once formally resigned his charge into his hands. The next day President Mayew assembled all the members in the great hall, and having there delivered an eloquent exhortation to peace and unity on the words, "Bear ye one another's burdens," he took the oaths prescribed by the founder, and produced the statutes, to which all were required to swear observance. Ten of the masters refused to do so, and, by order of the president, were deprived of their commons until they should yield their consent. Then a grammar-school was, by Waynflete's orders, set on foot in a part of the old hospital; and the next year the Bishop himself paid a visit to his foundation, for the purpose of inspecting the buildings, and bringing with him the deeds and documents of the society, together with eight hundred volumes of books; a truly noble commencement of the college library. This first visit of the founder since the regular installation of the society was a very solemn affair. He was met by the whole college in procession, headed by their president, who addressed to

him "a thesis, or proposition, with a short congratulatory oration, to the praise, honour, and glory of Almighty God, and on the magnificence of His name and works."

On the 22d, Waynflete set out for Woodstock, then the residence of the court, for the purpose of escorting King Edward, who of his own accord had promised to visit the college that evening, and pass the night there; an extraordinary mark of royal favour, which seems to have been particularly agreeable to the founder. A little after sunset, therefore, the royal train arrived, "a multitude of men going before the king bearing innumerable torches." Edward was accompanied by his queen, whose brother, Lionel Woodvyle, then filled the office of chancellor of the university. The college register furnishes us with brief notices of the royal visit, telling us how all the king's suite were accommodated, not too luxuriously;\* and how the next day, being Sunday, he with his lords, spiritual and temporal, "tarried, as was decent, until after dinner and noontide." Then there were of course more orations, to all of which Edward replied "with sufficient fecondity and facondity" (*feconde et faconde, satis*), declaring that, in proof of his esteem for Oxford, he would send his young nephews to be educated there. After this a grand procession was made round the boundaries of the college, wherein the king and his lords walked (as it is pleasant to read) "in a decent and orderly manner."

The statutes, first delivered to the college in 1480, received many alterations and additions from the founder at different times; and a copy revised by his own hand was, by his desire, laid up in a chest in the upper room of a tower which served as the muniment room. We do not intend to present our readers with any considerable extracts from these statutes; but a brief notice of some of their principal provisions cannot be without its interest, as

\* It was ordered by the statutes that each room on the ground-floor of the quadrangle should hold *two principal beds and one truckle-bed*; the chambers over them, with the exception of those assigned to the use of the president and a few others, had each *two truckle-beds*; and such was the simplicity of the age, that the lords spiritual and temporal enumerated as forming King Edward's suite had no better accommodation offered them than this.

illustrating the spirit which pervaded the scholastic institutions of this country in Catholic times. Never certainly have all questions connected with education been more widely discussed than in the present day; and all perhaps are capable of being resolved into this one,—whether secular learning is to be given as a thing distinct and separate from that which is religious, or whether religion is not rather to be the thread running through and knitting every other branch of education; whether it is not to be the primary idea of the whole system, which is, as it were, to receive *from it* its shape and colour, so that the student, as he increases in intellectual attainments, acquires also more and more of that religious spirit which is to direct him in their use and exercise. This, which would appear to be an open question in the nineteenth century, was no question at all in the fifteenth. The great men who founded our schools and universities, in their simplicity never dreamt that a day could possibly come when men would apply the term *education* exclusively to the training of the intellect. “Fools!” they would have exclaimed, with John Picus Mirandula, when his friend Politian spoke to him of men who found their only happiness in literature, “they seek in human science for what they can find only in the love of God.” “I warn the reader,” says one of the most learned among the saints,\* “that he believe not that reading can suffice to him without unction, science without charity, intellect without humility, or knowledge without grace.” Lovers of learning they certainly were; but the heart with them always came before the head, and with all their solicitude that their scholars should “make proficiency in divers and multifarious sciences and faculties,” it was always to be “to the praise and glory of God, for the exaltation of the Christian faith and the profit of holy Church.” Therefore it was that they lavished their wealth with such an unbounded hand on the *religious* portion of their foundations, and provided them with regulations which at first sight seem fitted rather for monasteries than colleges; so diligent were they to make religion hold the prominent place in the whole system,—an idea figured and

\* St. Buonaventura.

symbolised by the material prominence of the chapel, whose roof in all these old Catholic foundations rises high above that of the rest of the building.

The society of Magdalen College was to consist of a president, forty fellows, clerks, and thirty scholars, known as *demys* from the circumstance of their being originally admitted only to half commons; four priests to serve as chaplains, besides eight clerks and sixteen choristers for the service of the choir. Besides these, there was a school-master for the grammar-school, a person to teach and train the choristers, and various other officers. The fellows were to be chosen from certain dioceses and counties, and to be appointed to a year of probation before being admitted as fellows. The scholars were not to be chosen under twelve years of age; and all were required to be persons "of good morals and manners," with an aptitude for learning. The scholars were at their admission to be at least competently instructed in reading and plain-chant, and were afterwards diligently to learn grammar and logic. Neither would Waynflete allow them to advance to higher faculties till they were well grounded in grammar; "forasmuch," he judiciously remarks, "as a weak foundation betrays the superstructure." Provision was, however, made for the study of all the liberal arts; and various lectureships were instituted, which, with true largeness of mind, were to be open to all persons of eminence and merit. But it was Waynflete's principal aim that the study of the sacred Scriptures, the mother and mistress of all knowledge, should, in the language of the statutes, "spread her tents the wider," and that all other sciences should "militate under the banner of theology." So, besides the lectures on moral and natural philosophy, there were others on theology, as well as public theological disputations to be held in the college-chapel once a week; and the readers in divinity,—“whose charge,” as Heylin tells us, “is, lecturewise, t’ expayne the tenebrous hard knots of Scripture,”—were always to be most carefully selected; the famous Grocyn being among those who were personally chosen by the founder. “The hours of instruction and attendance on disputations, lectures, and exercises in the

chapel or hall, or in the university, were so many," says Dr. Chandler, "that little time was left for idleness. It was the idea of Waynflete, that to teach or to learn should be the business and pleasure of each individual, when unoccupied by the important duties of religion. His liberal views extended beyond his own society. They included every scholar and student in the university, as well as all persons of all nations, religious or secular, who were willing to resort to him for wholesome learning. To all comers gratuitous information was reached out by his hand—in grammar, and in moral and natural philosophy, with mathematics, and in divinity at his school, or at the public lectures in his college."

Thus far the statutes provided for the studies of the scholars; but they aimed at much more than merely making them good grammarians, logicians, philosophers, or even theologians. The design of the founder was to cherish in their hearts a deep spirit of piety and practical religion, so that his college should at once be a nursery of science and of faith. Hence he left very minute directions for the celebration of the divine offices, and required that all the fellows and demys should be in residence, lest divine worship in the college might sink into neglect.

Let us take a glance at Old Magdalen as it existed in times when its chapel was still untouched by the hands of sacrilege, and its statutes furnished a daily rule of life to its members. The president, fellows, and scholars rose at an appointed hour, and, after the Eton fashion, repeated certain prayers as they dressed, being an antiphon, versicle, response, and prayer in honour of the Holy Trinity, and a brief suffrage for the founder. Other suffrages for the souls of his father and mother, together with those of the chief benefactors of the college, and for all the faithful departed, were to be said by each one, daily at any time most convenient. Every one was to hear Mass daily, and many times every morning must the Holy Sacrifice have been offered on the six altars which then adorned the college-chapel. Of these daily Masses, the early "Morrow Mass," as it was called, was always to be said in the Arundel Chapel for the soul of Lord Arundel, the most splendid of all the



Magdalen benefactors, who, in 1483, annexed to the college the hospital of St. James in Northamptonshire, at a time when Oxford was visited by a pestilence, and the society were greatly in need of some such secure asylum where they might take refuge. The second Mass was always to be the Mass of our Lady, or the "Mary Mass," as it was called by our ancestors. "We enact, will, and ordain," says the founder, "that every day for ever, except on Good Friday, certain Masses be said in the chapel, of which the second shall always be that of the Blessed Mary, according to the practice of the Church of Sarum." The third Mass was to be a requiem "for souls of good memory," including, besides the two kings, Henry III. and Edward III., his dear and never-forgotten friends, Henry VI., Lord Cromwell, and Sir John Fastolfe, as well as his later benefactor King Edward IV. There were, moreover, a great number of Masses and prayers to be said for benefactors, of which we need not speak more particularly. The founder was to have an obit every quarter; and every day, after High Mass, one of the demys was appointed to repeat aloud in the chapel, "*Anima fundatoris nostri Willielmi, et animæ omnium fidelium defunctorum, per misericordiam Dei in pace requiescant;*"\* which formulary was likewise to be repeated in the hall after dinner and supper. Vespers were to be sung in the chapel every evening, and a solemn procession to be made about the cloister or boundary of the college. This was the procession at which we have seen King Edward and his court assisting, and it was made daily. Very solemn and beautiful must have been the spectacle it presented, winding among the shady walks by the water-side, or round the beautiful cloisters, chanting the appointed prayers. And this was done *daily*; in the midst of disputations and lectures, and all the business of college studies, the procession was never to be neglected. Nor must our readers suppose that this was at all an extraordinary practice: the daily procession was then common in most of our old collegiate establishments, and seems to have been a

\* "May the soul of our founder William, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace."

very favourite devotion in England. Foreign writers tell us, that nowhere was there so much solemnity observed in the making of processions as among the English people; and, indeed, their superiority over other nations in the performance of all Church functions is a thing repeatedly dwelt on. "Men saye," writes one old English author, "that in no londe is God so well served in Holy Church as He is in this londe. For so many fayre churches, ne so good arraye in churches, ne so fayre service, as men saye, is in no londe as it is in this londe." But besides the daily procession, there was yet another devotion, which was performed once a week,—we mean the antiphon to the Blessed Virgin, sung on all Saturdays after Compline. "Our pleasure is," writes the good Bishop, "that on every Saturday throughout the year, and on all the eves of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, after Compline, all and each of the fellows, scholars, and ministers of our chapel do devoutly perform among themselves in the common hall, by note, an antiphon in honour of the said glorious Virgin." This was probably the most common and the most popular of all our old devotions to the Blessed Virgin; and those at all familiar with the records of Catholic piety will remember the literally numberless guilds and endowments for keeping up the evening antiphon and supplying the five "gauds," or tapers, which at such times were generally burnt before her image in memory of her five joys. The antiphon was usually either the *Alma Redemptoris* or, still oftener, the *Salve Regina*, two of the most popular prayers then used in England, and two which, besides their intrinsic beauty, have claims on our love as having been the favourite expression of our forefathers' devotion to Mary. Waynflete resembled his predecessor Wykeham in his piety towards the Mother of God; and he showed it not only by providing for the Saturday antiphon in her honour, but also by another statute, which proves that he had not forgotten his old Eton habits. "We will," he writes, "that the president and each of the fellows of the said college do say in honour and remembrance of the most blessed Virgin, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all possible devoutness, on their bended knees, fifty times over the Angelical Saluta-

tion, together with the Lord's Prayer after every ten rehearsals of the aforesaid salutation." Our readers will observe that he was more moderate in his demands than good King Henry had been, who required an entire Rosary from his Eton scholars, while Waynflete exacted from his Magdalen fellows only a chaplet.

His care of his students, however, was not limited to their studies and their devotions; it was extended to their dress, and their whole exterior deportment. All were to wear a cloth gown and hood of one fashion; this outward conformity being intended as a mark of that interior unity the promotion of which the founder had so greatly at heart. All luxury or fastidiousness in dress was forbidden; and the peaked shoes and red boots, against which Wykeham had so warmly inveighed, were proscribed with equal severity by his successor. So also were other fopperies of the age; the knives and swords, which even ecclesiastics sometimes affected to carry, as well as "sabylls, martyns," and other costly furs. They were always to appear in public two together, and to observe a grave and decorous manner, speaking together when within the college in the Latin tongue. In the hall they were to observe strict silence, and the Holy Scriptures were to be read during meals. After dinner, however, they were permitted at certain times to draw round the charcoal fire; and might then recreate themselves with singing, and reciting *elegances* and poems, and the chronicles of the kings of England. But idle and frivolous amusements, such as card-playing, were forbidden, together with all noisy games, or any thing which could disturb the studies or devotions of others, as the keeping of dogs, and birds in cages. Finally, ample provision was made for the daily commons, salaries, and allowances to be assigned to each member of the society; and a sum was set apart to be kept in "the Founder's Chest" for extraordinary emergencies. The admirable method, as well as the almost unparalleled liberality, of Waynflete's arrangement has excited the admiration of all historians; and Wood observes, that "other poor scholars were daily fed with the broken meat from the tables in the public refectory (continuing so until 1667, at which time they were

stated), as also the entertainment of strangers, in place of that which was performed while it was a hospital, receiving daily sustenance with other supplies in such a measure that I think it exceedeth any foundation for secular scholars in Europe." Yet it seems certain that only a small part of Waynflete's original plan was carried out, and that he would have done much more had not the calamitous war of the period so long delayed the commencement of his work.

Admirable, however, as were the arrangements of the founder, they did not protect his society from the evils to which all human institutions are liable. The cursory notice of the refractory conduct of certain masters on the first delivery of the statutes, and the very significant exhortations of President Mayew to peace and unity, sufficiently indicate that at that early period of the foundation there were to be found murmurers and malcontents. The spirit of insubordination broke out into open tumult two years later, on the occasion of the election of the college proctors. The matter was at once referred to the Bishop, who decided that the minority must yield to the wishes of the majority, and addressed to them the following letter:

"Right entirely welbelovyd, we grete you welle.

"It is come to oure knowledge, and to our displeasure, that there ys growynge a dyvysyon and dyscorde withinne oure college, wantonly and undiscretely for the election of the proctors in the universitie. In case that there be any persone of oure College under your rule that will be sedy-cycus, wylful, and not conformable to the advyse and the gydyng of you, and of the more party of the masters of our saide college, it is to be presumed, and of grete lyklyhode, that such a person is not apte nor disposed *ad convivendum*, but that such would be troubelous and fulle onprofitable for my saide College, giving grete impediment to vertue and cunning. Wherefore whomsomever ye, and the more party of the forsaide masters find cremynous and obstynate, taking wylfullye a waye contrarye to the more party, we command you that then ye discharge such person or personys from all manner of interest that they have in our forsaide College. Christe have you in His gydyng."

This letter appears to have put an end to the spirit

of discord which had found its way into the cloisters of Magdalen, and from that time the "cremynous" masters offered no more "impediment to vertue and cunning."

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### CHAPTER VIII.

Waynflete's charities. He frees the bond-slaves. His favourite devotions. His patronage of printing. Encouragement of Greek studies. William Grocyn. The Knight of the Golden Cross. School at Waynflete. Richard Fox, the founder of Corpus Christi. Visit of Richard III. to Magdalen College. Father Lawrence of Savona's epistle. Waynflete's last days. His death.

WAYNFLETE held his bishopric for the long period of thirty-nine years; and though, during the earlier portion of that time, his political duties necessarily took him much from his diocese, it never lost his care, and so soon as he was free from state-engagements, he devoted himself heart and soul to his pastoral charge. He was not one of those men who are generous only in one way, and who will lavish their wealth on a favourite scheme with an unsparing hand, whilst they are niggardly in what does not concern their cherished fancy. Waynflete's benevolence was of a much larger kind. "He was," says his biographer, "ever intent on alleviating distress and misery." His daily alms were dispensed with an open hand, and he looked on himself as appointed to be the friend and protector of the poor. Towards one class, and that the most helpless and despised of all, his heart yearned with special tenderness; they were the poor bondsmen, whose position under the feudal system was one of peculiar hardship. Vast numbers had, indeed, obtained their freedom during the preceding century; but serfdom was not yet wholly abolished, and very many still remained shut out from all the privileges of freedom. To liberate these poor slaves was one of the favourite charities of William of Waynflete, and numbers of them were by his means released from that state of bondage, which he, in common with all the great prelates of the Catholic Church, denounced as contrary to the laws of nature. Nor was this all; for Chaundler adds, that he literally "abounded in his works of mercy." Charity was the element in which



he lived ; it was the feeling uppermost in his heart, and to be read in every line and feature of his beautiful face. His biographers again and again express their wonder at the singular success with which he made his way through the troublous times in which he lived, without making a single enemy, beloved alike by the partisans of York and Lancaster ; and they attribute it to the “wariness” and prudence with which he “exercised his high offices.” But we are disposed to think that prudence had not so much to do with it as is imagined. Waynflete was far less of a statesman and a man of business than his great predecessor Wykeham ; his character was more entirely that of an ecclesiastic. There was a simplicity and innocence in his conduct, as well as in his exterior manner, which affords a readier explanation of the marvel ; it was his perfect unworldliness which in reality overcame the world. Men of the stormiest passions, when they trusted no one else, trusted the Bishop of Winchester. He appeared at court, indeed, and sat in the councils of princes ; but no one ever thought of him as of a courtier. His heart was occupied all the time with schemes of charity, or oftener still with prayer. A man’s favourite devotions are among the truest indications of his character ; and Waynflete’s spiritual tendencies were those which drew him closely and habitually to the foot of the Cross. Again and again we find one emblem repeated in his windows and on his sculptures,—it is that of the Five Wounds, with the words which probably formed his favourite ejaculation :

“Vulnera quinque Dei  
Sint medicina mei.”

The Mass said in honour of the Five Wounds was one which he often celebrated, and which in his will he directed should be said 5000 times for the repose of his soul.\* We

\* The following extract, given by Dugdale from the will of Henry Pisford, may illustrate the bequest in Waynflete’s will, as well as the intense and affectionate devotion with which the Sacred Wounds were then regarded. He directs that there be said for him five trentals, in worship of the Five Wounds of our Blessed Lord, and that they be said in five days. And the priest who says Mass is the first day to remember the wound of the right Hand, the second day that of the left Hand, the third day the wound of His

may perhaps remind our readers that this was the commonest and homeliest of all our old English devotions, and that the piety of our forefathers knew no more familiar object on which to expend itself than "the five wounds of our Lord God," or "the five gauds of St. Mary." Of Waynflete's love of the Rosary we have already spoken; the master of Eton and the founder of Magdalen never let a day pass without saying it on his bended knees; and though there may be some who may think the good Bishop's devotions had something almost of rusticity about them, there are others, we feel sure, who will not love him the less on that account, and who will recognise in them that peculiar spirit of tender simplicity which runs through all the old spiritualists of our own land, the unction of whose writings has probably never been surpassed.

Meanwhile, though during the latter portion of his life he withdrew himself from politics, he continued to take an active interest in all that was connected with the promotion of learning and religion; and the age felt the influence of his labours in other ways besides his foundations. He seems to have been one of the earliest patrons of the new art of printing, which found its way into England somewhere about the year 1474. Among the very first books printed by Caxton was an English version of Cicero *De Senectute*, which had been dedicated and presented to Waynflete by the author, William of Wyrcestre, a few years previously; and the Bishop's old favourite, the *Nova Grammatica* of Leilont, to which Carmelian, the poet-laureate, prefixed a Latin epigram, wherein he promises the Bishop an eternal renown in reward of his having persuaded the author to draw up the work.

Caxton's most generous friend was Anthony Wydeville, the accomplished Earl of Rivers, who assisted him in work-

most precious and blessed Heart, the fourth and fifth days the wounds of His two Feet; and to have him (Henry Pisford) in remembrance, and to pray to the Blessed Lord of Heaven for the blood which He shed out of those Five Wounds to have mercy on him, and to take him to His grace; and, in worship of the said Five Wounds, he wills that his executors should cause to be made five lights, and set them before the picture of our Lord in the Gray Friars' Church.

ing his types, which were set up in Westminster Abbey, and who introduced the printer to the notice of his brother-in-law, the king. This distinguished nobleman was well known to Waynflete, and accompanied King Edward in that visit to the new foundation at Oxford to which we have already referred. The press at Westminster Abbey was regarded with almost as much interest by the Bishop as by his younger and more enthusiastic friend; and among the eight hundred volumes which he brought with him to his college, were doubtless more than one first edition of Caxton, which would render them an almost priceless treasure to modern bibliomanists. There yet remains one book more ancient still, the history of which is connected in an interesting manner with that of the foundation of Magdalen. It is a manuscript on parchment of the reign of Henry III., being a Dedication Sermon from the pen of Ivo Bishop of Chartres, who lived early in the twelfth century. It formed part of the valuable collection of Sir John Fastolf, who left it by will to Waynflete; to whom it was delivered, according to the orders of the donor, by William of Wyrcestre in 1473, when the dedication of Magdalen College was just about to be celebrated. At the commencement, Wyrcestre has left in his own writing a brief account of the whole matter; and the precious Ms. is still preserved in the archives of the college-library.

We have already mentioned the very early encouragement which Waynflete bestowed upon a man who, some years later, contributed more than almost any other to the revival of letters in this country: we mean William Grocyn, the first divinity lecturer appointed at Magdalen, who afterwards became the friend of Dean Colet, and of Linacre, the tutor of Erasmus, and the godfather of Lilly the grammarian. A similarity of tastes united all these great men; it must be owned that they dearly loved grammar, and the Greek grammar especially. Greek was not generally taught in the universities in Waynflete's time; it was introduced by Grocyn and his associates; but its introduction had already been contemplated by Waynflete, and formed a part of his grand educational schemes, as we are assured by President Humphrey, who says that he intended "the

seeds of Greek and the humaner literature to be sown early in different parts of the kingdom, to yield a plentiful increase to the whole nation;" whilst another author tells us that he provided a master and usher to teach the rudiments at his grammar-school at Magdalen, and settled a particular professor of it at his college to confirm and perfect the maturer scholars in that noble tongue. In fact, nothing was more natural than that the restoration of Greek studies should have attracted the attention of one so devoted to the cause of "grammar learning" in all its branches. The taking of Constantinople by the Turks, which was the immediate occasion of the revival of Greek literature, took place in Waynflete's lifetime; and among the crowds of fugitives who fled to the kingdoms of the West, and carried with them the classical treasures which had hitherto been but little known in Europe, some found their way to the shores of England, and were hospitably received by the Bishop of Winchester. In particular, we find mention of a certain knight of the Golden Cross, named Emanuel, towards whom Waynflete exhibited all that charity which he was accustomed to lavish on the unfortunate, and for whom he obtained a gift of twenty gold pieces from the royal treasury in consideration of his losses. A love of Greek possibly mingled with the kindness of heart which actuated Waynflete in his exertions on behalf of Emanuel; and we are disposed to think that the visit to Winchester of the knight of the Golden Cross had some influence in directing the future studies of Magdalen College. When Waynflete died, he left two youths hard at work in his college-cloisters, who were destined to continue and perfect his great work by a close imitation of their revered master: they were Colet, the founder of St. Paul's School; and Wolsey, the founder of Christ Church College, and of the Greek professorship in the University of Oxford.

We hope our readers are not weary of the subject of "grammar learning;" for in justice to Waynflete we must notice his further labours in the cause of its extension. At the head of the grammar-school which he had attached to his college he placed John Anwykyll, a master whom he

had selected on account of his singular skill and merit. In concert with the venerable founder, Anwykyll devised a new system of teaching, which met with extraordinary success. After Waynflete's death, the college, in pursuance of the provisions of his will, settled on this excellent teacher an annual salary of ten pounds for fifteen years, if he should reside so long in Oxford, "reading and teaching, with diligence and effect, grammaticals, poems, elegancies, and other arts of humanity." Anwykyll engaged to do so under a penalty of ten pounds; and promised to do his best to bring up some of his pupils, and qualify them for the task of instructing according to his method. His two successors, who were both Magdalen men, proved themselves worthy disciples of their master, and were both authors of noted grammars. Besides this, Bishop Waynflete provided a grammar-school at Brackley, and founded one on a yet larger scale at his native place. He was, as he tells us, desirous, by planting grammar learning in the place of his nativity, to extend it to the northern provinces of the kingdom; and for this purpose resolved to erect a school and chapel on certain lands which he possessed at Waynflete. The building still stands, containing two large rooms one above the other, the under one formerly serving for the school, and the upper one for the chapel. Two towers project at the west end; in one is a staircase, in the other hangs the old Angelus bell, inscribed with the first words of the *Ave Maria*. Remains of painted glass in the windows exhibit the Eton lilies; whilst some years ago was still to be seen in the great east window the portrait of the Bishop, with his arms and his favourite distich to the Sacred Wounds. At the east end was also the altar, and an image of St. Mary Magdalen, whom Waynflete never omitted to honour. The chapel was amply endowed, and so was the school; the master being assigned a salary equal to that enjoyed by the masters of Eton or Winchester.

Waynflete was now an old man; but he survived to witness fresh revolutions, which terminated in the restoration of that Lancastrian line of princes to whom he had proved so faithful an adherent. Yet he took no part in the political struggles which succeeded the death of Edward IV.



When the crown was seized by Duke Richard of Gloucester, two of his friends indeed—Moreton Bishop of Ely, and Richard Fox, formerly a student of Magdalen—joined the young Earl of Richmond, and gave him their hearty assistance in his preparations for invading England. Of Moreton we need not speak more particularly in this place; but the name of Richard Fox is so intimately connected with that of Waynflete, whose pupil and disciple he ever reckoned himself, that we must add a few words regarding him. He was destined to be almost the last of that illustrious line of Bishops whose virtues and learning added an additional splendour to the see of Winchester. He was great as a prelate, and great as a statesman; whilst he was almost equally distinguished as a soldier,\* a diplomatist, and an architect. He would have been no disciple of Waynflete's, indeed, if he had neglected the science of architecture; but in truth he loved it as well as his master, and his chantry chapel at Winchester almost surpasses in beauty those of his predecessors. On the accession of Henry VII., he was promoted to high favour, and became successively Bishop of Exeter, Bath and Wells, Durham, and Winchester. To a man with his tastes and predilections, the see so lately held by Wykeham and Waynflete had charms and associations which were all its own. So he set to work to imitate those who had gone before him, not merely by repairing his castles and palaces, wherein, says Leland, "he did much reparation, and built many praty chambers," but by founding free schools at Taunton, and at Grantham his native place, by patronising literature with a generous hand, and at last by founding another Oxford college, which stands as a perpetual memorial of his deep and absorbing devotion to the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, being dedicated (under the title of Corpus Christi) "to the praise and honour of Almighty God, and the most holy Body of Christ."

\* Whilst Bishop of Durham he gallantly defended his castle of Norham against King James IV. of Scotland, whom he forced to abandon the siege; and he was also present at the siege of Terouane, in the reign of Henry VIII. He had stood sponsor to the last-named monarch, but, happily for himself, did not live to see all the evil which was brought on the Church by him whom he had held at the baptismal font.

This foundation for a time eclipsed even Magdalen in celebrity; for Fox invited learned men from all parts of Europe to become members of it, and founded lecture-ships for the explanation of the Greek and Latin authors to all students who were willing to attend. Ludovicus Vives was the first humanity lecturer; "the mellifluous doctor," as he was called, in double allusion to the elegance of his Latin, and the circumstance of a colony of bees having settled in the chamber which he occupied over the western cloister.

Winchester retains almost as many memorials of Fox as it does of Wykeham or of Waynflete. The vaulting of the choir from the tower to the east window, the beautiful stone side-screens, and the ornamental chests containing the remains of Saxon kings, are all his work. His arms are in the eastern window, with his motto, "Est Deo gracia;" whilst at the back of the altar is his beautiful chantry and tomb. The oft-repeated emblem of the pelican "*in her piety*," that is, feeding her young ones with the blood from her own wounded breast, marks the last resting-place of the founder of Corpus Christi. It is, as every Catholic knows, one of the favourite emblems of the Blessed Sacrament; and Fox adopted it for his badge. He carved it on his crosier, he painted it in his windows, and, finally, he placed it on his tomb: living or dying, Christ in the Sacrament of His love was the object of his continual veneration; and whether at Winchester or Oxford, or St. Mary Overy at Southwark, the emblem of the pelican is sufficient to mark out the benefactions of Bishop Fox.

But all his munificence was not spent on buildings and foundations. He was far from being one of those who, in their love for the material temples of God, forget the living temples, which are His poor. Fox was a lover of the poor, even more than he was a lover of the arts. His enormous household was kept up mainly with the view of supporting a number of humble friends whom he thought had claims upon him; and no fewer than two hundred and twenty persons were daily fed at his table. When he died, he left provision for every one of these; whilst to a great number of other poor persons he left sums of money, which

were found in separate purses of leather, carefully set apart, and each inscribed with the name of the intended legatee.

We have ventured on this digression because Fox was the friend of Waynflete's old age, and because in the excellence of the disciple we trace an unmistakable resemblance to the excellence of the master whom he followed. He shared, as we have said, in the devotion which the venerable old prelate had ever shown to the house of Lancaster; but it does not appear that the part taken by him and Moreton brought any suspicion on Waynflete, who had long since withdrawn from the political arena. On the contrary, he seems to have been as great a favourite with King Richard as he had been with his two predecessors. That monarch, immediately after his coronation, stopped at Oxford on his way to Gloucester; and visited Magdalen College, where the founder was superintending some additions to his buildings. Richard's reputation was at that time free from the odium which it soon afterwards incurred by the murder of his nephews; and he met with a warm reception. No one knew better than he how to be gracious and condescending; and the fat bucks which he ordered to be provided for the scholars, together with a generous largess of money, no less than the privilege he granted to the university, gained him considerable popularity among the Oxonians, and especially at Magdalen, where he lodged. Two solemn disputations were held in his presence in the college hall,—the first on moral philosophy, and the other on divinity,—wherein Master William Grocyn was the respondent; and when he and his gallant train departed on the third day, the society inscribed an entry of the event in their register, which terminated with the words, "*Vivat rex in æternum!*" Few would have guessed that such words would have been applied to such a king; but Richard had his better qualities, and these were all that were presented to the Oxford scholars. He was eloquent, learned, and a lover of learning; and his visit to the university was quickly followed by a grant, whereby foreigners were freely permitted to import printed books into England for sale. He also assigned to the college a portion of the forfeited estates of the unfortunate

Duke of Buckingham, who was executed in the same year. Waynflete did not accompany the king when he departed from Oxford; he remained at his college for the purpose of delivering to the society a revised collection of his statutes. The original book was deposited, by his orders, in a chest in the upper room of a tower which had been intended as a muniment room. It is still preserved, and at its beginning are some directions written with the founder's own hand, as well as some marginal notes, and part of a table or index.

He took leave of his society with a fatherly exhortation, recommending to all, that, as true disciples of Christ, they should maintain holy obedience, peace, unity, and charity. The state of the college, and the reputation enjoyed at that time both by it and by its venerable founder, may best be gathered from a dedicatory epistle addressed to Waynflete by Father Lawrence of Savona, a friar minor of London, and prefixed to his book entitled "The Triumph of the Love of our Lord Jesus Christ." "I have thought it good, most reverend father and worshipful lord," he says, "to consign this book to your charity, that, being kindly cherished by you, and supported by your pastoral authority, it may shine forth more fully, be more surely tested, and be longer preserved: that the majesty and importance which my meanness cannot confer upon these things, may be conferred on them by your pastoral authority, your venerable gray hairs, your consummate prudence, which is praised and known by all men, and shown forth by your innumerable deeds of piety and charity. Most justly, therefore, reverend father, may I commit this book, as a little bundle of divine love, to be preserved and cherished in your bosom; and that the more fitly, by so much the greater the kindness, charity, and mercy of such a prelate is every where and by all men declared. For none can be found who has had recourse to the tenderness of such a father, and who has not been received with clemency. Let us add, also that which no envy can obscure, no subterfuge can deny,- the charity and liberality, namely, that is to be found in the breast of so great a prelate. Witness that college, so magnificent,

so ample, and beautiful, erected with such care and munificence from its very foundations; wherein so many venerable priests, duly appointed to the worship of God, so many Bachelors of Sacred Theology, so many Masters of Arts, so many Students of Sacred Letters, are constantly supported and maintained. And let us add, how beautiful, how magnificent, and how solemn is the holy sanctuary erected in that college, with its ornaments, its books, its chasubles and jewels, devoted to the divine worship; and that spacious cloister, supported on its rich columns, and surrounding a most fair and delightful ambulatory. Then there is that splendid library, amply furnished with volumes on divers sciences and learned faculties. Moreover, on what a sunny site, surrounded by flowing waters, does the mighty pile of buildings stand! So that not only is it worthy to be called the delightful dwelling-place or college of priests and students, but further, and with more truth, a paradise of delight to both body and soul. Nor will we mention the many other splendid buildings which have been raised, or the daily pious works on behalf of the poor which are undertaken at the command of the same most loving pastor. For what we have said touching the college, which is dedicated to Magdalen the glorious apostleess of our Lord Jesus Christ, is sufficient to set forth and declare the charity which is to be found within his breast." In 1485 the battle of Bosworth Field put an end to the usurpation of Richard III., and placed on the throne the last representative of the house of Lancaster. When tidings came of Richmond's departure from the coast of Brittany, Waynflete was among those to whom Richard applied for assistance, in the shape of a loan of money. Such applications, it need scarcely be said, were not to be refused; and the Bishop was forced to deliver into the hands of the royal treasurer the sum of 100*l*. But in spite of Richard's friendliness to himself, and the protection he had given to his college, Waynflete could not conceal his delight when he beheld the accession of an heir and namesake of his murdered sovereign. One of the first acts of Henry VII. was to confer the vacant primacy on his friend Moreton; and Waynflete himself was soon



marked out as an object of royal favour. Too old to attend the coronation of the new king in person, he sent Mayew to represent him, and gave orders that the sum of fifteen shillings and threepence halfpenny should be allowed him for his expenses on the occasion. In the act of resumption which was passed by Henry's first parliament, we find a special clause introduced to the effect that the same "should not be prejudicial to William Bishop of Winchester, nor to the president and scholars of Saynt Mary Magdalen." This continued protection of the interests of his college he probably owed to the thoughtful care of his friends Moreton and Fox, who filled the chief posts in the royal councils.

Waynflete's career was now drawing to a close; in the December of this year we find him removing from Southwark to South Waltham, and, conscious of his approaching departure, his great worldly concern was still to provide for the well-being of his favourite foundation. Mayew was almost constantly in attendance on him, and received various directions from his lips, which were most exactly carried out by the society after his decease. On the 27th of April 1486, "he received," says Budden, "something as it were of a divine impression or admonition, not unlike that of Ezekias,—‘Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.’ He therefore hastened to draw up his will, which is dated on that day. In it he declares that, panting for the life to come, and perceiving that the day of his waiting in this valley of tears has arrived at its eventide, and that the time of his departure is at hand, he before all things commends his soul to Almighty God, the Blessed Virgin, St. Mary Magdalen, and all his patron saints; and directs that his body should be buried in the tomb which he had already provided for it in a chapel dedicated to the blessed Magdalen, in his cathedral-church. After various bequests, he leaves all his lands to the use of his college, whose necessities he commends to the charity of his executors; directing the residue of his property to be dispensed to the poor, and devoted to pious purposes, including Masses and alms-deeds for his own soul, and the souls of his parents and friends. On the day of his burial,

the trental, or month after his decease, and on other days, his executors are further charged to cause 5000 Masses, in honour of the Five Wounds of Christ and the five joys of the Blessed Virgin, to be celebrated for the same intention. He lived only four months after this, but these four months were filled, as his whole life had been, with labour and thought for others. The Hospital of St. Cross, which had been almost refounded by Cardinal Beaufort, had suffered grievously during the civil wars; and the revenues bestowed on it by a Lancastrian prince had been, as a matter of course, plundered by the triumphant Yorkists. Waynflete had sorrowfully beheld these acts of depredation, which he was powerless to prevent; but now, with the consent of Henry VII., he set on foot an examination into the whole matter, and did his best to carry out the Cardinal's intentions, and to restore his "Almshouse of Noble Poverty" to the state in which he had left it.

The instrument by which this was effected is dated at his palace of South Waltham, on the 11th of August 1486, the fortieth year of his consecration,—the very day on which he surrendered his soul to God; so that to the very last he seems to have been in the enjoyment of some strength of mind, if not of body, and in the unimpaired possession of his faculties; for although he died the same day, being Friday, the morrow of the Feast of St. Laurence, at four o'clock in the afternoon, he was able not only to execute the above-named deed, but to make a collation to a vacant rectory in his patronage, and to give institution to two livings; one of these being the rectory of Mottisfont, vacant by the death of his own coadjutor and suffragan, William, Bishop of Sidon. A few days before this, however, he had been seized with sudden illness: "A grievous disease," says Dr. Budden, "creeping and stealing through his limbs and marrow, got into the citadel of his heart, and so entirely overcame him as speedily to bring on dissolution." No particulars are preserved of his last moments; yet we scarcely need them to feel sure that the faith and piety of his departure were in harmony with a life which had presented one continued example of humility and love.

## CHAPTER IX.

**Burial of Waynflete.** His chantry chapel. His effigy. Relics preserved of him in Magdalen College. Sacrilege committed in the seventeenth century. Magdalen Tower. Choral service on the 1st of May. Conclusion.

ACCORDING to the directions given in his last testament, the remains of the holy Bishop were removed to Winchester, and deposited in the tomb which he had prepared for his place of burial during his lifetime. Winchester Cathedral already possessed the chantry chapels erected by his two predecessors, Wykeham and Beaufort; and Waynflete's, which stands exactly opposite to Beaufort's, on the east side of the traverse wall, behind the choir, appears to have been begun very soon after his consecration. This custom of preparing a place of sepulture during their own lifetime was a common one with the great prelates of the time. It was a perpetual memorial of their death, which they placed before their eyes in the cathedrals where they sat enthroned as princes of the Church; and oftentimes they would celebrate requiems at the chantry altar beneath which they were one day to be laid, as though the better to bring home to their own hearts the thought of death, and make familiar acquaintance beforehand with their place of burial. The chantry chapel of Bishop Waynflete is more florid in its decorations than that of Wykeham, whose architecture always bears the character of a certain massive severity, whereas that of his successor is rich in ornament. A profusion of delicate spire-work rises from the roof; and the masonry, we are told, has never been excelled, if even it has been equalled, in England. The three niches at the east end, which are now vacant, were formerly filled with images of St. Mary Magdalen, St. Peter, and St. Paul; and beneath them stood the altar whereon were offered the five thousand Masses in honour of the Sacred Wounds, and other requiem Masses for the soul of the founder.

The tomb stands within the chapel. It is of gray marble, surmounted by a blue slab, whereon lies the figure of the Bishop, his eyes raised to heaven, his hands clasped in prayer, and holding between them a heart, in allusion to

the words *Sursum corda*, which occur in the preface of the Mass. He has rich jewels on his gloves, and his wristbands are likewise studded. The episcopal ring is on the middle finger of his right hand; his chasuble falls in full rich folds, and the maniple and stole are still perfectly discernible. The crosier which he holds has lost its original head, its present one being a modern restoration: the low gothic mitre is richly jewelled. At his feet appears an angel clothed in white, and holding on his breast a shield charged with the Bishop's arms. A brass fillet once ran round the edge of the tomb, which was probably inscribed with his favourite verse from the *Magnificat*; but it has long since been torn away. The sides of the tomb exhibit the Eton lilies within richly ornamented quatrefoils, and twisted pillars of fine workmanship support the corners. "The effigy on the tomb," says Dr. Chandler, "may be considered as affording an exact and authentic representation of the person of Waynflete, as alike descriptive of his appearance in his pontificals and of the piety which was so principal an ingredient in his character." Indeed, it is scarcely possible to examine the features without feeling sure that you are gazing at a portrait, and that the portrait, moreover, is one of no ordinary man. A more beautiful brow, and eyes more full of mingled sweetness and intelligence, can hardly be imagined; something of the fire of enthusiasm is there, but it is all softened and tempered with charity.

His society mourned for him as for a beloved father; and almost immediately after his decease we find them sending to Waltham, and removing thence certain memorials of their venerable founder, to be carefully preserved in the college treasury. There were his mitre, crosier, and pontifical vestments. Of these nothing now remains but a sandal and stocking; the rest fell into the hands of Puritan plunderers at the time of the great rebellion, when Magdalen College, having exhibited a conspicuous loyalty to the unfortunate King Charles I., was marked out for peculiar vengeance. Whatever it was in the power of malice and sacrilege to do, was done, at the time of the parliamentary visitation of Oxford, to destroy the beautiful monu-

ments of Catholic antiquity which had escaped the plunder of the Reformation. The painted windows were trampled into fragments by the brutal troopers, by whose hands we may suppose the precious mitre was soon broken up. They likewise vented their rage on the tomb of the founder at Winchester, a party of cavalry riding into the cathedral for the express purpose of defacing the effigy of the founder of Magdalen. The beauty and decorations of his chapel, we are told, increased their savage efforts to spoil it; for in the eyes of Waller and his soldiers there was something which savoured of idolatry in the carved work of the sanctuary, which they proceeded to hew down with axes and hammers, and would probably have utterly destroyed, if the admirable masonry had not defied their utmost efforts. The stocking and sandal, which may still be seen at Magdalen College, are singular and valuable specimens of the ancient church vestments. The stocking is of cloth-of-silver, thickly embroidered with golden birds and flowers in coloured silks, with here and there the emblem of King Edward IV.,—a cloud, with sun-rays darting from it. The sandal is of thick crimson velvet, dotted with specks of gold, and embroidered also with flowers and leaves of coloured silk.

But Waynflete's best memorial is his college; and though we have no intention to carry on its history after its founder's death, we cannot refrain from briefly noticing the erection of that beautiful tower which is justly considered one of the architectural glories of Oxford, and which certainly seems to have been included in the original design. The first stone was laid by President Mayew in 1492, just six years after Waynflete's death; and the reverential and almost scrupulous fidelity exhibited by the society to every wish or direction which he had expressed, leaves no room for doubt that the plans were either his own, or had at least been approved by him. Tradition has given the credit of its erection to Wolsey, who twice filled the office of bursar whilst the tower was building; but Dr. Chandler disputes the accuracy of this assertion, whilst he does ample justice to the character of the great Cardinal, which he clears from many of the aspersions popularly



cast upon it. Whoever may have been the architect of Magdalen tower, its beauty at least is undeniable; and from the time of its completion, it was made the scene of an annual ceremony, which is still kept up as a matter of antiquarian curiosity, long after its real signification has been forgotten. "On the 1st of May," says Anthony Wood, "the choral ministers of this house do, according to antient custom, salute Flora from the top of the tower at four in the morning, with vocal music of several parts; which having been sometimes well performed, hath given great content to the neighbourhood and auditors underneath." Our readers will readily conclude that the "antient custom," which directed that the choristers of a Catholic college should sing from the summit of their chapel-tower on a certain fixed anniversary, had in it some more religious object than the salutation of Flora, a patroness concerning whom there was nothing prescribed in the statutes. Our Catholic ancestors had, indeed, a singular love for the month of May, and were wont to welcome it as a time of innocent joy and thanksgiving. For, as old Stow tells us, "on May-day in the morning every man, except he were hindered, would walke into the sweete meadowes and greene woodes, there to rejoyce his spirit with the beauty and savour of sweete flowers, and with the harmony of byrds praying God in their kind." And certain prayers to be used at this season may be found in some of the old church primers. The sweet music of Magdalen tower, however, had a more directly religious origin. On the 1st of May the society was wont annually to celebrate the obit, or requiem Mass, of King Henry VII., who proved a generous benefactor to the college, and who is still commemorated as such upon that day. The requiem was not, indeed, celebrated *on the top of the tower*, as Mr. Chalmers in his history of the university affirms, in total ignorance that a requiem is a Mass, and that a Mass must be said upon an altar; but it is probable that the choral service chanted on the 1st of May consisted originally of the *De profundis*, or some other psalm, for the repose of Henry's soul, and was a special mark of gratitude for a special benefaction. The sum of 10*l.* is still annually paid by the

rectory of Slimbridge, in Gloucestershire, for the purpose of keeping up this ceremony ; "being, if I mistake not," says Dr. Chandler, "part of the produce of a distinct portion of tithes there given by this monarch." The singing now takes place at five in the morning, and the effect of the clear voices of the choristers as they float down from the lofty summit is singularly sweet and solemn. So soon as they cease, the bells break out, and usher in the spring-time with a merry peal.

Such relics of old customs diverted from their original purpose, and continued by generations who are even ignorant of their very meaning, have in them a melancholy significance. They mark the revolution which has separated us from the times which gave them birth. But those times have their monuments among us, and our collegiate institutions are of the number. Protestantism has vainly tried to seize and adapt them to its own purpose ; and the attempt has but made it all the plainer that for Protestantism they were never reared. Their traditions are all of their first founders, and even their dead stones are eloquent of the faith. And thus Oxford and Cambridge, and Eton and Winchester, still have their use even in the eyes of Catholics. They stand, like our old cathedrals, as beautiful petrifications, carrying down to each successive generation the memory of the age and of the men who created them. "When these stones were put together," they seem to say, "a life and a spirit breathed through all that is now so dead and meaningless. Protestantism as yet had no existence, and all England knew but one faith, which was the faith of the Catholic Church."

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## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE A, p. 76.

WITHIN the quadrangle of Magdalen College may still be seen (unless removed within a recent date) the remains of a stone pulpit; whence, on the Feast of St. John Baptist, a sermon was every year delivered, the quadrangle being decked with green boughs, and the hearers seated on the grass. This custom was in allusion to the preaching of the Baptist in the wilderness; and it was kept up for a considerable time, even after the change of religion. Indeed, we believe that the annual sermon on the feast was delivered in the open air down to a very recent period, when it was agreed by common consent to abandon the old custom, and assemble in the neighbouring chapel.

### NOTE B, p. 90.

William, Bishop of Sion, had been Waynflete's coadjutor and suffragan for more than thirty years, performing most of the episcopal duties on his behalf. To give the reader some idea of the extent of these duties, it may suffice to say, that he held no fewer than 158 ordinations during this period; ordaining 778 persons to the priesthood only, to say nothing of acolyths, subdeacons, and deacons.

These two good Bishops, who had been so closely united in life, were not long separated by death, both being called within the same month to receive the reward of a blessed eternity.

THE LIFE  
OF  
SIR THOMAS MORE



W. LINTON.

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# THE LIFE

OF

## SIR THOMAS MORE.



### CHAPTER I.

More's parentage and birth. His residence with Cardinal Morton. His Oxford studies, and intimacy with Erasmus. More's practices of piety. He retires among the Carthusians. Dean Colet becomes his director. His marriage, and entrance into public life. His patriotic independence. Death of Henry VII. Popularity of the new king. More's professional career. Erasmus visits him in London. Death of his first wife. His second marriage. He attracts the notice of the king. The *Utopia*. He is made privy-councillor. His intimacy with Henry.

THE Wars of the Roses had not long terminated, and the throne of England was still occupied by the victorious champion of the house of York, when Thomas More was born in Milk Street, London, in the year 1480. His father, Sir John More, was one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench,—a man whom his son describes as “courteous and pleasant, harmless, gentle, full of compassion, just, and incorrupt.” His mother, too, was a woman of no ordinary virtue; and it is said, that before the birth of her children she saw the number and characters of them all in vision, engraven as it were on her wedding-ring, and that the face of one of them shone with superior brightness to the rest.

The hopes raised by such a presage were not disappointed; at St. Anthony's School in Threadneedle Street, where he received the first rudiments of education, he applied himself with such diligence to his studies, that, to use the quaint expression of his grandson, he seemed “rather greedily to devour than leisurely to chew his gram-

mar-rules." His father, perceiving his singular abilities, resolved on procuring him what was then the surest means of advancement, by placing him in the household of one of the great nobles of the court; making choice for this purpose of the celebrated Cardinal Morton, a friend of Fox and of Waynflete, and at that time Archbishop of Canterbury, and lord high chancellor of England. This great and good man was not long in discerning the uncommon qualities of his young ward, and was accustomed to predict that he would one day become "a marvellous man." Boy as he was, his innate and irrepressible love of humour had already declared itself; and we read how, at certain holiday entertainments which took place in the Cardinal's household at Christmas, young More would sometimes step in suddenly among the players, and extemporise a part of his own with so much wit and readiness as made more sport for the audience than all the rest besides.

He was just entering his seventeenth year, when his noble patron sent him to Canterbury College,\* Oxford; and very soon we find him with "his whole soul set on his books." Oxford was then one of the principal seats of the newly-reviving taste for classical learning; and among the young students who thronged the lectures of Grocyn and Linacre, few were so enthusiastic or so persevering as the young student of Canterbury. The university was, in fact, thronged with men of learning; with all of whom More soon contracted an intimacy. It was here that he first became acquainted with Colet, his future director; and with Wolsey, then bursar of Magdalen, and known to the world only as the first classical scholar in Oxford. But there was another yet closer friendship which More formed at this period of his life. The famous Erasmus visited the university in 1497; and notwithstanding a considerable difference in their age, a similarity of tastes soon gave rise to a close intimacy between him and the subject of this memoir. The influence of such a man over the mind of a young and inexperienced student was naturally great; yet it is no small proof of that firmness and independence of character which showed itself in so marked a manner

\* Afterwards included in the foundation of Christ Church.

throughout his after career, that, in spite of the warm friendship which united them, More never allowed his religious principles to be affected by the scoffing spirit which Erasmus was wont to display towards sacred things. The age was rife with heresy; and many who did not openly abandon their allegiance to the Church, scrupled not to ridicule her ordinances, and throw contempt upon her authority. Among these must be numbered Erasmus, the tendency of whose caustic satires on the clergy was so unmistakable, that it was commonly said of him that he hatched the egg which Luther laid. Yet he lived and died a priest of the Catholic Church; he never fell into heresy, nor could he be called a worldly or irreligious man; he even wrote many treatises of piety which have been praised as masterpieces of eloquence: but his religion was more of the head than of the heart, and learning with him was the mistress rather than the handmaid of faith. The great St. Ignatius\* was accustomed to say that he never read any of the works of Erasmus without experiencing a spiritual dryness in his soul; the unction which is to be found in the simplest writings of one of God's saints was wanting in his most classic and eloquent pages. The young student of Oxford, whose name was thenceforth so closely associated with his own, resembled him in many things,—not only in his love of learning, and specially of those classic treasures of antiquity the charm of which was felt by both of them with an enthusiasm which had in it something of

\* The following are the words of F. Francesco Mariani, in his life of the saint: "About this time he was advised to read the book *De Milite Christiano*, by Erasmus of Rotterdam, a writer who is much praised for his pure Latin. . . . He began to use the book; but as often as he began to read it, he perceived that all the fire of devotion was quenched within him; and after taking counsel with God, he cast the book away. Afterwards, when general of the Society of Jesus, he proscribed all the writings of this author; and would not suffer them to be read, except by a very few of approved learning and virtue, who were enjoined to read with great caution. It was not that he considered all the works of this writer to be infected with heresy; but in order that none might be so attracted by his facetiousness and sarcastic pleasantries, as to proceed from wholesome studies to what was injurious to devotion."—*Life of St. Ignatius*, b. i. ch. xi.



excess, but also in that natural vein of humour which, when used as a weapon of controversy, and directed against religious abuses, easily degenerates into an irreverent treatment of religion itself. But though, in some of his earlier writings, he was led into expressions which his better judgment afterwards condemned, More never approved the license which Erasmus allowed himself, and earnestly advised him in later years to follow the example of St. Augustine, by publishing a book of retractations, to correct the errors of his earlier works. Erasmus did not follow this advice; and it would seem that the captious and scoffing temper he displayed contributed in some degree to cool his friend's esteem. "In process of time," says More's descendant and biographer, "Sir Thomas grew less affectionate unto him, by reason that he saw him fraught with much vanity and inconstancy in respect of religion." In fact, the points of sympathy between the two friends seem hardly to have extended beyond a similarity in their intellectual tastes; no two moral natures could be more unlike than theirs; and whilst the one finished his course by laying down his life in defence of his religious principles, the other could treat the very idea of such a martyrdom as something romantic and extravagant: "I have no inclination," he writes in one of his letters, "to peril my life for the truth; if put to the trial, I am afraid I should imitate St. Peter."

But, at the time of their first acquaintance, there was no thought of such a trial for the faith of either of them; the storm had not yet gathered which was destined to break with such destructive violence over the Church, and there seemed but the promise of a great revival of learning, into which More entered with the hearty enthusiasm of a young collegian. His college-life was distinguished, however, by something better even than devotion to his studies: it was, we are expressly told, "free from all the excesses of play and riot;" a circumstance in part, perhaps, to be attributed to the prudent caution of his father, who "kept him short," says Lloyd, "while his college kept him strict." But it was not by forcible restraint alone that More was preserved from the contagion of the world. He

exhibited the rare example of one endowed with a lively imagination and high animal spirits united with a deep and solid piety. The mortifications to which he subjected himself in secret were as constant as the flow of his playful humour and brilliant wit. This watchfulness over his senses he redoubled on his removal from the university to London, where he commenced his studies for the law at Lincoln's Inn, in the year 1499. Indeed, it is curious to observe the austere spirit which constantly mingles in the devotional practices of More,—an austerity which had in it certainly nothing sour or morose, and which is the more worthy of our consideration from the genial spirit of enjoyment and hilarity which formed a part of his very nature. But he deemed, to use his own words, that “in self-watchfulness consisteth the true wisdom of a Christian man;” and that such a one should be ever on his guard, “lest the handmaid, sense, should grow too insolent over her mistress, reason.” This struggle for self-conquest was not without its suffering; no man ever yet obtained the mastery over his passions without a conflict more or less severe in proportion to the strength of his own nature; and in More's case the task was not an easy one. There are tokens, in the brief notices left us of this portion of his life, of his having passed through a severe period of mental suffering, during which he conceived so strong a distaste for the world, and so profound a sense of its worthlessness and emptiness, that his thoughts turned to the cloister, and he long debated in his mind the question of entering among the Franciscan friars, there to serve God in a state of perfection. Although the relaxed state of most religious orders at that time deterred him from realising this design, he spent no less than four years in a kind of religious seclusion; living with the Carthusians in their house in London, and following all their exercises of piety, though he never bound himself to them by any kind of engagement.

Of the details of this time of trial his biographers tell us nothing; but its results were evident through his after life. We do not know the process by which it was made clear to his own soul, and to the minds of those who

guided him, that he was called by God to take part in the active business of the world, instead of flying from it altogether; but when at last this question was decided, and he prepared once more to enter into society, as one before whom there lies the busy career of public life, we discern under the hearty and genial gaiety which he never laid aside evidences of a spirit of utter detachment such as we may safely venture to say has been rarely, if ever, equalled. The detachment, indeed, which separates itself from the world is a virtue which has before now peopled the desert and the cloister. But More was to furnish us with an example of sanctity altogether different in kind. He remained in the world, mixing in its busiest affairs, sharing in its highest honours, nay, even taking part in its pleasures, with that light-hearted freedom which made him courted and welcomed in all societies. He created for himself a domestic circle, the charm of whose familiar records remains fresh even to our own day. Yet, whilst he seemed to enter with such zest and heartiness into the stirring interests of a political career, or the gentler enjoyments of his Chelsea home, his heart remained strangely free; honours and pleasures were to him but "gay golden dreams, from which we cannot help awaking when we die." Nothing had the power to cling to him; and we may say that as he passed through the most crowded thoroughfares of the world, he knew how to keep off the multitudes that thronged about him, as though he were scarcely sensible of their touch. This detachment, the secret of his soul, and one which lay there so deep that it was often hidden from ordinary observers, explains some apparent eccentricities in his life, as well as the seemingly careless indifference with which he went to death. His conduct at the last has even given scandal to some readers; but the fact was, that death was to him but the final act,—the completion and fulfilment of a bond, which he had long ago signed and sealed,—of entire self-renunciation. More on the scaffold stood in the same relation to the world and to God as More in the heart of his family, or on the chancellor's bench: he had broken utterly with the world before it had ever learnt to know his name, and belonged exclusively to God.

These remarks, though somewhat premature, seem necessary before following him from his retirement in the Charterhouse into his domestic and political career, in order that we may carry with us the means of understanding and appreciating both his public and private character. None can read his life without feeling that a noble independence of soul was its distinguishing feature,—an independence which, whilst in the case of other men it is too often closely allied with a proud self-sufficiency, in More was but the result of the preoccupation of his heart with God. Indeed, the notices of his first appearance before the public during the period of his professional studies present him to us as a student of divinity rather than of law. We read of his delivering lectures on St. Augustine in St. Lawrence's Church, Old Jewry; and Erasmus tells us that his audience included the most learned churchmen of the land. Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, was at this time his director; and a letter has been preserved addressed by him to this celebrated man, which shows that the tie between them was that of the closest friendship. After bewailing his absence from town, and the hindrances to a life of piety which he found in a city life, More beseeches him to return; suggesting that, if London be not to his taste as a residence, he will find all the sweets of country retirement in his own rectory of Stepney. "Meanwhile," he continues, "I pass my time with Grocyn, Linacre, and Lily; the first being, as you know, the director of my life in your absence, the second the master of my studies, and the third my dearest companion in all that I undertake." This little group of illustrious scholars had sprung up in the cloisters of Magdalen, under the very eye of Bishop Waynflete. The intimacy existing between them and More, and specially his friendship with Colet, had a very marked influence on his after life. Colet was, in fact, one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was almost the last of that long line of founders, who had spent their lives and energies in the task of supplying England with seminaries of piety and learning. "I desire nothing more earnestly," he writes in a letter to Lily, "than to bring up children in learning and good manners." His zeal for

the revival of classical learning surpassed even the enthusiasm which Waynflete had displayed. In this he was ably supported by Grocyn, to whom the restoration of Greek studies in England is generally attributed. That great scholar, having first imbibed a taste for classical literature at Waynflete's college, found plenty to foster and encourage it in the course of a long residence at Florence. There, in 1493, he was found by Colet, in company with Linacre, revelling in the classic glories of the court of Lorenzo de' Medici. They were the pupils of Politian, the friends of Pico de Mirandola; and they were, moreover, among the crowds who daily thronged the great church of St. Mark's, and hung on the burning words and impassioned eloquence of Jerome Savonarola. When the school of St. Paul was founded by Colet a few years later, Grocyn became its divinity lecturer, and Lily its first master. We may imagine how the study of Greek went on under such teachers: the school-books were compiled by Colet, with the aid of Lily, and Erasmus himself did not disdain to give them the last touches of his graceful pen.

But Colet was something more than a mere lover of Greek; he was a man of austere piety, a powerful preacher, and one fearless in rebuking vice and corruption in every shape. His bold advocacy of reform, and his denunciation of sin and worldliness wherever they might be found, have induced some to rank him among the so-called precursors of the Protestant reformation. But the reformation at which Colet aimed was one not of faith but of manners,—to be brought about, not by destroying the ordinances of the Church, but by enforcing them. He laboured at the very same work to which Savonarola was devoting himself at Florence, and which was more successfully carried out at Rome in the following century under the gentler apostolate of St. Philip Neri. In other words, he tried to revive a spirit of fervent practical piety among all ranks of Catholics, and specially among those living in the world. More was his friend and his penitent; and it was by his advice that he finally abandoned his desire of retiring to the cloister, and determined on settling in the married state. His manner of doing so. as the story is



told by his son-in-law Roper, had certainly a peculiarity about it which some may quote as an example of philosophic indifference, but which we would rather adduce as illustrating the complete mastery which he had gained over passions which are often wont to exercise an irresistible power over other men. Among his friends was Mr. John Colte, of Newhall in Essex, whose family consisted of three daughters, to the second of whom More had given his preference. "She was," says Roper, "the fairest and best-favoured; yet when he considered that it would be both great concern and some shame to the eldest, to see her younger sister preferred before herself in marriage, he then, of a certain pity, framed his fancy to her, and soon after married her, continuing his study of the law at Lincoln's Inn." She was considerably younger than her husband, and wholly inexperienced in the world; circumstances of which he took advantage, setting to work to complete her education, and mould her character to his liking.

It was probably in 1504, the year preceding his marriage, that More, who had been returned as a member of the House of Commons, took his first step as a politician, and that in a direction which indicated the uncompromising independence of his mind. The reigning monarch, Henry VII., had applied to the Commons for an unreasonably large subsidy on the marriage of his daughter. The demand was an unwelcome one; but More alone had the courage to withstand it, which he did with such eloquence and power of argument, that the subsidy was finally rejected. The king's indignation against the "beardless boy," as he termed him, who had disappointed his purpose, was extreme, and so unequivocally expressed, that the young patriot deemed it prudent for a time to keep in retirement, and even contemplated the advisability of removing out of England. The king revenged himself by instituting a vexatious suit against More's father, and kept him in the Tower until he had paid a fine of 100*l.*; but it does not appear that More was himself in any way molested, and all further apprehensions were removed by the death of the king. The intervening time was spent by More in a way which shows how little his tranquillity was disturbed

by the prospect of exile or disgrace. He studied the French tongue at home, and recreated himself with the viol; moreover, he perfected himself in geometry, astronomy, and other liberal sciences, and gave himself up to a most attentive study of history; besides which he completed several of his smaller pieces, including his *Life of John Picus Mirandola*, and a volume of epigrams, chiefly published at the desire of Erasmus, as we learn from one of his letters to his friend.

When the accession of Henry VIII. relieved him from his fears of court vengeance, he appears to have shared in some degree the enthusiasm with which the new monarch was welcomed by his subjects. The exactions and oppressions under which England had groaned during the reign of the first Tudor filled all classes with the hope of better things under the rule of a young and chivalrous prince, who joined to the charms of a handsome person and gallant bearing the rarer advantages of a learned and pious education. Few sovereigns, indeed, have enjoyed greater popularity than did Henry at the period of his accession; and the poem in which More celebrated the event was but one among a crowd of laudatory verses which showered around him the hopes and flatteries of the nation.

More was now in his thirtieth year. Besides his professional practice, he filled the office of under-sheriff of London, whose duties were then judicial, and of considerable dignity and emolument. His court was held every Thursday; and many causes of importance were brought before him, in the decision of which, we are assured, he gained the esteem of his fellow-citizens for his indefatigable assiduity, as well as his unshaken integrity. It would not have been More, however, if to these higher commendations we could not add, that the celebrity which began to attach to his name as an upright judge and a man of learning, was accompanied with a score of anecdotes affording most ample testimony that the under-sheriff had no intention of sacrificing his love of a jest to the gravity of his judicial character. On some occasions it was his humour to unite the two; and an opportunity one day presented

itself too favourable for him to resist. A beggar-woman presented herself in his court demanding justice; and, on inquiry, it appeared that the party complained of by the suitor was none other than the under-sheriff's wife. Mistress More had been presented by some friend with a little dog, which had become a family pet, but which the beggar-woman insisted had been originally stolen from her keeping. After hearing all that she had to urge, More sent for his wife and her dog, and determined that the latter should be received as the most impartial witness. Stationing his dame at one end of the hall, and the beggar at the other, he desired them both to call the dog, who at once ran to his former mistress, to whom he was immediately adjudged by the under-sheriff; nor would he suffer his wife again to take possession of her favourite till she had paid his price in full.\*

His intimacy with Erasmus was about this time renewed by another visit of that celebrated scholar to England. It was during his residence with More, at his house in London, that Erasmus published his *Praise of Folly*;

work which in its day had an extraordinary popularity, but the scoffing spirit of which exposed him to deserved censure from all religious minds. If More accepted its dedication, and even published a written apology for the work, we must remember that he did so under the persuasion that the opponents of Erasmus had taken too seriously what was intended merely as a playful sally of wit; yet it is to be wished that his love of wit had in this instance been somewhat less lively, and that he had not given the influence of his approval to a satire which undoubtedly occasioned just scandal to the Church. It was the shrewd remark of Leo X., on reading this celebrated work, that "Erasmus himself had his place in the region of folly;" and one would say that it was but a shallow and low-toned wit which could represent religion as only patronised by dunces.

In 1512, the domestic circle into which Erasmus was

\* This anecdote is variously related by More's biographers; some referring it to a later period in his life, and laying the scene in his own hall at Chelsea.

so closely admitted, and of which he has left us more than one admirable picture, underwent a sorrowful change by the death of its mistress. More's first wife died six years after their union, leaving him with four children—one son and three daughters. It was chiefly to provide for the care of this young family that two years after her death he entered on a second marriage. His inclinations seem to have been even less interested in this alliance than they had been in the case of his first wife. Alice Middleton, the subject of his second choice, was a widow seven years his senior, "whose favour," says his grandson, "could, I think, have bewitched no man." In fact, she possessed the charms neither of wealth, beauty, nor temper; and, to add to these deficiencies, she was "by disposition very near and worldly." More, it is said, had first made her acquaintance when seeking her hand on behalf of a friend, and had been given to understand that he would speed better in his wooing if he would speak for himself; so having reason to believe that she would at least prove a careful and conscientious mother to his children, he married her; "a thing," observes the same writer, "which otherwise he would never perhaps have thought to have done." She did not disappoint him in her conduct towards his family; and though her shrewish temper and innate littleness of mind would have made her the domestic plague or any man but More, his unalterable sweetness of disposition and power of making the best of things contrived to prevent the happiness of his home from being in the least disturbed. As he had endeavoured to refine and educate the simplicity of his first wife, so he now practised on the fretfulness of his present partner, winning her from her exclusive addiction to a life of keen and watchful housewifery by lessons on the viol, and protecting himself from the outbreaks of her sharper moods by his irresistible and un-failing pleasantry.

Meanwhile he rose rapidly at the bar, where his practice gained him a considerable professional income. Of his character as an advocate, it is sufficient to say, that he is known never to have accepted the defence of any cause in whose equity he did not conscientiously believe; that the

poor and friendless might always claim his gratuitous services ; and that he never suffered any lawsuit to proceed which it was in his power to settle by amicable arbitration.\* It was not long before his merits attracted the notice of the king, who was eager at that time to assemble in his court every man of wit and learning, and left no means untried to draw More into his service. With Wolsey he had already formed a personal acquaintance at Oxford ; and at the desire of Henry the great minister, now raised to the rank of Cardinal, condescended to be the first to visit his old friend, seeking by many arguments to attach him to the king's service. But he was jealous of the independence he enjoyed in a private station : " No man," says Erasmus, " ever strove harder to gain admittance at court than More endeavoured to keep out of it." He, however, reluctantly accepted a mission to Bruges, forced on him by the importunity of the Cardinal, who on his return offered him a pension in the king's name, which More steadily refused. He assigns his reason for this refusal in a letter to Erasmus : he would not do any thing to make his fellow-citizens distrust his sincerity, should the time come when any controversy might arise on the subject of their privileges. It is plain that his political principles remained unchanged from what they had been at the period of his resistance of the subsidy, and that he was prepared now, as then, sturdily to advocate the liberties of his fellow-subjects when any occasion might present itself. It seemed no easy task to convert such a man into a courtier ; and the publication of his *Utopia*, which took place about this time, must have satisfied the king that if he succeeded in attaching the author to his service, it would at least never be at the sacrifice of his principles. Indeed, some passages of this famous book must have been somewhat distasteful to the ears of a Tudor sovereign, accustomed to be addressed by his courtiers in terms of extravagant adulation. It would

\* More appears to have had a positive aversion to the profession of the law as it was ordinarily followed. He admitted no lawyers into his *Utopia*, and gives them but a sorry character. " They consider them," he says, " as a sort of people whose business it is to disguise matters, and to wrest the laws at their pleasure "



almost seem as though More were pleading as he wrote to be left at liberty, and not forced into a position for which he possessed none of the qualifications usually required. But the merits of his book only increased the king's eagerness to gain the friendship of its writer. In fact, in its own day, the *Utopia* excited a degree of admiration which modern readers may be disposed to think somewhat larger than it really deserved. We must, however, remember that it was the first modern production of its kind, and had therefore the charm and merit of originality. The *Utopia* is an historical romance, in which the author professes to describe an imaginary republic lately discovered in the new world; and whilst he gives an account of its various social and political institutions, he takes occasion freely to criticise those actually existing around him. In many of the views thus put forward he anticipates the humaner policy and larger toleration of later times; yet most readers will be disposed to doubt whether society would on the whole be the gainer by the adoption of Utopian legislation. It would, however, be unfair to suppose that every flight of fancy in the romance must be held as expounding the author's serious sentiments. He himself probably intended it as nothing more than a work of the imagination, in which he sometimes indulged his satire, and sometimes gave vent to the musings of a philosophic mind; but which he certainly never meant to be understood as a formal profession of his religious or political creed. The most remarkable opinion advanced in the book is that in favour of the toleration of all religious sects. In after years the frightful disorders of which he was an eye-witness somewhat modified his views on this subject, and satisfied him that the civil power may justly and rightly prohibit the promulgation of doctrines adverse to good morals and the peace of society. He was forced to admit that some theories which look well enough on paper are not easy to reduce to practice, though, as we shall have occasion to show, he never advocated persecution, and did his best to temper the severity of the existing laws, at least in their execution.

The publication of the *Utopia* at once sufficed to esta-

blish the reputation of its author. Originally written in Latin, it was almost immediately translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and English. All the learned men of the day hastened to express their delight at its lessons of antique wisdom and its pure latinity; and King Henry became impatient to secure for his own court the lustre of so rare a genius. A fortunate accident happened at this time to favour his wishes. A cause was to be argued before the king, in which More was chosen to defend the claims of the Papal legate against the crown, on the occasion of the seizure of one of the Pope's ships by the royal cruisers. He argued the case with such spirit and learning, that the decision was given in the legate's favour. Henry lost his cause; but was so charmed by the wit and eloquence of his opponent's council, that, says Roper, "for no entreaty would he any longer forbear his service, so that he brought him perforce to the court, and made him one of his privy council."

This was a result which More had little expected from his successful pleading against the crown, and which it is certain he as little desired. He was in the position of a man who has his honours thrust upon him. In a letter to one whose name was destined to be afterwards indissolubly associated with his own, Fisher Bishop of Rochester, he says, "I have come to court extremely against my will, as every body knows, and as the king himself twits me for it in sport. And here I hang, as unseemly as a man not used to ride doth sit unhandsomely in his saddle." Yet he was not insensible to the charm which undeniably attached to the grace and affability of the king. In speaking of it, he incidentally uses an illustration which conjures up before us a familiar picture of London in Catholic times: "He is so courteous to all men," he writes, "that every one may find somewhat whereby he may imagine that he loves him; *even as do the citizens' wives of London, who imagine that our Lady's picture near the Tower doth smile on them as they pray before it.*" How little the writer of these lines foresaw that the prince whose affability he was illustrating by this comparison was to bring on the country a religious revolution which should so utterly sweep away

all such memorials of faith and piety, that we find it difficult to believe they could ever have existed in the streets of the English metropolis. But these were Henry's golden days, when his court had a reputation for virtue, learning, and even for devotion, throughout the whole of Europe. If indications were not wanting in the king himself of an imperious will, and a laxity of principle, these were so subtle as to escape any but a very close observer; and More at present knew the sovereign to whom he had become so special an object of favour by report alone. We shall see that it needed but a short time for his acute and penetrating judgment to form other conclusions on a nearer acquaintance.

Honours now were thickly showered on their unwilling recipient, who found himself successively raised to the offices of privy councillor, master of requests,\* and under-treasurer of the royal exchequer. At the same time he received from the king the still honourable dignity of knighthood; and his courtier-life may be said to have begun in good earnest. It appears often to have been inexpressibly burdensome to him; for the king soon took such pleasure in his society as to exact his almost constant attendance. It was his wont to send for him to his cabinet when the business of the day was over, and there to recreate himself by conversing with him on scientific and philosophical subjects. Sometimes he would even have him up at night, and walk with him on the roof of the palace, "considering with him," says Roper, "the diversities and operations of the stars and planets." At other times he was called in to assist at the royal supper, after the council had broken up, to enliven the king and queen with his inexhaustible fund of sportive humour. But all this was little better than bondage to More, who longed for the ease of his own domestic circle, and to whom the astronomical investigations of the king were but a small compensation for the loss of his personal freedom. When at last the king's demands on his time became so continual that

\* It is noticed, however, by Mr. Foss, in his *Judges of England*, that in the epitaph he wrote for himself More makes no mention of this office.

scarcely once in the month could he get leave to visit his wife and children, he hit on an expedient which was altogether an original one. He was fain to render himself less agreeable, that his society might be the less sought after. 'Misliking such restraint on his liberty,' says his son-in-law, "he began somewhat to dissemble his nature, and so, little by little, to disuse himself from his former mirth; so that he was no more so ordinarily sent for." More must indeed have been hard pressed when he could find no better resource than to be dull; and probably no sorer penance could have been assigned him than the necessity of putting a restraint upon the flow of his wit, and suppressing the merry conceit or racy repartee as it rose spontaneously to his lips. However, by this denial of his nature he managed to secure himself some degree of domestic freedom at his home at Chelsea. But even here his retirement was often broken in upon by the king; who would come suddenly to Chelsea, and walk with him in his garden, leaning on his shoulder, and talking with him with the easy familiarity of friendship, even condescending at times to dine with him without invitation or ceremony. Such extraordinary tokens of royal favour do not appear, however, in any degree to have dazzled the mind of More. Roper, afterwards his son-in-law, and who for many years previously had been an inmate of his house, tells us that on one such occasion, having seen the king walking with him for an hour or more, with his arm thrown affectionately about his neck, he could not forbear congratulating him on the singular familiarity he enjoyed with his highness. "I thank our Lord, son," was his calm reply, "I find his grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth favour me as singularly as any subject in the realm: howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to go." Such an observation at such a time, when not a cloud had as yet obscured the public reputation of Henry, and when his frank affability had won him the unaffected popularity of his subjects, argues much for the sagacity of him who made it; and it is an instance of that profound gift of spiritual discernment

which is so often to be found in characters of simple and single-hearted integrity.

We have alluded to More's home at Chelsea, and perhaps this is the most fitting place to introduce some of those pictures of his domestic life which have been preserved with such charming fidelity by eye-witnesses. The troublous events of More's course as a statesman and royal councillor will necessarily lead us to scenes of a far different nature; and before entering on them, we would willingly pause with our reader to contemplate one of the most beautiful pictures ever left to the world, of a Christian and well-ordered household.

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## CHAPTER II

More's house at Chelsea. His daily manner of life. His devout practices. Care of his servants. Education of his children. His correspondence with his "school." Margaret Roper. Her learning and virtue. More's sweetness of temper. Character of his wife. His hospitality, and liberality to the poor. His contempt of riches. Remarkable answers granted to his prayers. Recovery of his daughter Margaret. His trouble at the errors of his son-in-law Roper. He obtains his conversion. His dread of heresy. The respect he shows his father. Holbein's portrait of More and his family. More's friends.

It was not until after the death of his first wife that More's daily-increasing professional income enabled him to remove from the house in Bucklersbury, which he had previously occupied, to Chelsea, where he purchased a mansion, the exact site of which has been warmly disputed, but which appears to have stood at the north end of the present buildings known as Beaufort Row. It was situated on the banks of the Thames, in those days the grand thoroughfare to the City; and thither he daily proceeded by water, to discharge the duties of his office. At the farther end of his garden he had added a handsome pile of buildings, which commonly went by the name of the "new buildings," and included a chapel, gallery, and library; the whole chiefly serving for the purposes of his own private studies and devotion. His new home soon became the



resort of the most learned and distinguished men of the day. Its hospitality was kept up in the old English style; and Erasmus often refers in his letters to its doors ever open alike to rich and poor. Indeed, More was preëminently a social man; Erasmus says of him that he seemed to be made and born for friendship, and that conversation with men of congenial minds formed his chief earthly pleasure. "No nature is so harsh," he writes, "but that *his* talk can make him merry; and no matter so unpleasing but he with his wit can shake from it all tediousness."

But his household was not merely the centre of a genial and delightful society; it had the yet higher recommendation of being regulated according to the rules of strictest discipline. He was an early riser himself, and exacted similar habits from all his family, whom he gathered together morning and evening in the chapel, where he recited certain prayers and psalms with them of his own selection; he never suffered any to be absent from Mass on Sundays and holidays, and on the eves of great feasts it was the custom for the entire household to watch until Matins. For himself, he heard Mass daily; and with this duty he suffered no business, however pressing, to interfere. On one occasion a message from the king on urgent matters of state was brought to him whilst thus engaged; but he refused to stir till the conclusion of the Holy Sacrifice. When he left the chapel, he turned to those about him: "Let us serve God first," he said; "the king's turn comes next." Roper tells us that it was his invariable custom before entering on any matter of importance to confess, hear Mass, and communicate; indeed, the time he gave to his devotional exercises may appear extraordinary in one the demands on whom were so varied and increasing. Every Friday, and on certain other days, he was wont to retire to his apartments in the new buildings, and there spend the entire day in prayer and meditation; and statesman and man of business as he was, he found leisure for frequent pilgrimages, which he always made on foot, contrary to the relaxed and luxurious manners of the day.

Indeed, it is worthy of observation in one who was not insensible to the abuses prevalent among a rude and ignor-

ant people, that, so far from despising as childish or superstitious the popular devotions of the Church, he ever evinced for them a special predilection, and shared in them in a way which often drew on him the censure and ridicule of persons more guided by the dictates of human respect. His pilgrimages may be taken as one instance of this, and his deep and reverent love for the ceremonies of the Church was manifested on every occasion. Thus he never failed to be present at the Rogation processions, and at those of Corpus Christi, when he often acted as cross-bearer; and it being once suggested to him that it would better befit his rank and dignity if he were to ride, he answered with some warmth, "God forbid I should follow my Master on horseback when He went on foot." In the same spirit he was accustomed, even when lord-chancellor, to assist in the choir of his parish church, where, wearing a surplice, he would sit and sing with the rest. It happened once that the Duke of Norfolk, coming to dine with him on a certain holiday, found him thus engaged. He was not a little scandalised at what he deemed a degradation unbecoming the high office of chancellor, which More then filled, and took on him, when the service was over, to remonstrate with his host. "What!" he said, "is my lord-chancellor turned parish-clerk? You dishonour the king and his office." "Not so," replied Sir Thomas, with his usual smile; "for, as I take it, the king, your master and mine, will not surely be offended by my serving his Master and mine." Again, we find it said of him that he loved the glory and beauty of the house of God, and bore such reverence for holy places, that no necessity would ever induce him to speak there of any secular or temporal affairs.

The discipline established in the family of More forms the subject of a beautiful letter from Erasmus, written at a time when he made one of the happy Chelsea household. "With what gentleness," he says, "does my friend regulate his household, where misunderstandings and quarrels are altogether unknown! Indeed, he is looked up to as a general healer of all differences, and was never known to part from any on terms of unkindness. His house seems to enjoy the peculiar happiness that all who dwell under

its roof go forth into the world bettered in their morals, as well as improved in their condition; and no spot was ever known to fall on the reputation of any of its fortunate inhabitants. Here you might imagine yourself in the academy of Plato. But, indeed, I should do injustice to his house by comparing it with the school of that philosopher, where nothing but abstract questions, and occasionally moral virtues, were the subjects of discussion; it would be truer to call it a school of religion, and an arena for the exercise of all the Christian virtues. All its inmates apply themselves to liberal studies, though piety is their first care. No wrangling or angry word is ever heard within the walls. No one is idle; every one does his duty with alacrity, and regularity and good order are prescribed by the mere force of kindness and courtesy. Every one performs his allotted task, and yet all are as cheerful as if mirth were their only employment. Surely such a household deserves to be called a school of the Christian religion."

In fact, More had discovered the happy secret of blending a strict discipline with all that was most sweet and attractive. His devotion and his austerity were as far as possible removed from every thing puritanic; he was a man who enjoyed himself, and liked to see others do the same, and who relished a jest almost as much as he did a quotation from Plato. His grandson Cresacre, speaking of his irrepressible love of humour, tells us that he never laughed at his own witticisms, which flowed from him naturally and without an effort, but that he spoke them so gravely that few could say whether he were in jest or earnest. "And yet," he continues, "though he never left his mirth, his heart was ever humble and mortified, and all the while he exercised acts of self-denial which worldly men would have wondered at." He had almost as much care for his servants as his children; and in the old Catholic household, of which his may be considered as the perfect type or model, the relation in which the domestics stood towards the head of the house did not greatly differ from that of children. He was a stranger to the modern principle which makes us content to receive the paid services of those who live under our

roof as though they were rendered by pieces of machinery destitute alike of sensibilities or of souls; he treated his servants rather as beings on whom, as on himself, was stamped the image of God, and for whose souls he was in some degree responsible. In his intercourse with them, therefore, he ever mingled something of that familiarity and tone of personal interest which might be looked for from a father rather than from a master. "His very chiding of his servants," says Erasmus, "makes him but the more beloved." In those days every man of rank was expected to maintain a crowd of followers, whose disorderly lives were too often a source of grievous scandal to their neighbours.\* To avoid what were the almost inevitable evils resulting from so large a number of persons associating together in idleness, More spared no pains to supply all with suitable occupations. He even sought to refine and humanise them by encouraging among them pursuits of a higher character than those of mere manual labour. If any of his domestics seemed to have an ear for music, or a taste for any other accomplishment, it was carefully encouraged. He had a library for their use, well stored, not only with books, but with astronomical and musical instruments, and a collection of natural curiosities. The study of natural history was one of his own favourite pursuits. His biographer Rastell tells us, that "he had great pleasure in beholding the form and fashion of beasts and fowl of all kinds. There was scarcely any sort of birds he had not in his house. He kept an ape, a fox, a weasel, a ferret, and other beasts more rare. If there were any strange thing brought out of other countries, and worthy to be looked upon, he was ever desirous to buy it." In addition to these provisions for their amusement, he gave

\* He refers, in the introduction of his *Utopia*, to the number and character of these undisciplined serving-men, who, he assures us, supplied England with those countless thieves and vagabonds, whose excesses were the disgrace of the country, and who were executed in such crowds, that sometimes no fewer than twenty might be seen hanging on the same gallows. It is stated by Holinshed that altogether above 72,000 criminals suffered death during the reign of Henry VIII., though this probably includes his judicial murders for the supposed offences of heresy and high treason.

each man a little plot of ground in his garden, which he was allowed to cultivate as he best liked. Cards and dice, however, he strictly forbade, together with every other pursuit likely to engender quarrelling and contention.

If such was his treatment of his servants, it may be well supposed that his children were the objects of yet more tender care; and, in truth, beautiful as is the character of Sir Thomas More in almost every relation of life, it is as a father that we best love to think of him. His family included, besides his own four children, the daughter of his second wife by her former marriage, an orphan girl, whom he had adopted as his own and brought up with the rest; and at a later period, after the marriage of his daughters, their husbands and children; besides which it would seem that there were others, not of his own kindred, whom he educated under his roof. Erasmus describes him as living "with his wife, son, and daughter-in-law, his three daughters and their husbands, with eleven grandchildren. There is not," he continues, "any man alive so loving to his children as he; and such is the excellence of his temper, that when any thing happens which cannot be helped, he takes it as though nothing could have chanced more happily." The task of directing his children's education he took on himself. No man was better fitted for the office of teacher; for his mind was essentially one of those which, overflowing in its abundant richness, is as ready to communicate as it is apt to receive. He had, moreover, the rare art of being able to adapt himself to all ages and dispositions, and never thought it beneath him to use his great gifts in order to smooth the difficulties of children's studies.

If More had a weakness, it was to be found in his love of learning: not that in his eyes it ever took the place of godliness; for while all in his household applied their leisure to study, piety was their first and chiefest care. But he certainly attached a value to the cultivation of learned pursuits, especially among women, which most persons in our day would think excessive. A scholar himself, he could not be content unless his daughters were scholars also. In this he rather led than followed the fashion



of the day; and the fact that the sixteenth century presents us with so many examples of women deeply skilled in the learned sciences and languages, may in part have resulted from the circumstance that the first household in which the education of women was deemed worthy of any consideration at all was that of Sir Thomas More. For many years previous to his time female education had been utterly neglected; and it was natural enough that when the profoundest scholar of the age undertook to be the first to introduce something more of intellectual culture among the females of his own family, the boundaries which are now supposed to separate the pursuits of the two sexes should not have been very accurately defined. Moreover, it must be remembered, that England as yet had no literature of her own which was worthy of the name. The Greek and Latin authors were the only resource of those who would be students at all; and the Latin language was still sufficiently a living tongue to render its cultivation of much more practical necessity then than now. English ladies, therefore, of the sixteenth century had no help for it; and the Greek poets, the tomes of the fathers, together with the composition of declamations and logical exercises, formed the only course of studies which the age provided for them.

It is clear, however, that More had views of his own on the subject of the education of women; for in a letter addressed by him to Master William Gunnell, who then held the office of their preceptor, we find him defending at some length the principle that learning is equally adapted for both sexes. "But if it be granted," he continues, with characteristic quaintness of illustration, "that the soil or woman's brain be of its own nature bad, and apter to bear fern than corn (by which saying many do terrify women from learning), I am of opinion that a woman's wit is therefore the more diligently to be cultivated, to the end that nature's defect may be redressed by industry."

On this principle he constantly acted; and the "school of Sir Thomas More," as the company of young students was familiarly termed among themselves and the circle of illustrious friends who frequented the house, soon acquired

a wider celebrity than was ever attached to a domestic schoolroom either before or since. When More was at home, he took an active part in directing his children's studies; and when absent from them, his letters bear abundant evidence that his interest in their pursuits remained undiminished. The correspondence between him and his "school" has a charm peculiarly its own; we see in it a great mind unbending to prattle to little readers, yet always remaining graceful even in its moments of freest relaxation. He exercises his wit as readily, and we may say as elegantly, on their childish jests as he would have done on the most classic subjects, and in the courtliest assembly; and he takes pains to point out the errors in their compositions, and gives them rules how to avoid them and improve their style. We will give a few specimens of this interesting correspondence, the first being a letter addressed to all the young students, and bearing the superscription,

*"Thomas More to his whole School sendeth greeting :*

"You see how I have found out a compendious way of saluting you all, and making spare of time and paper, which I must needs have wasted in saluting every one of you by name; which would have been very superfluous, because you are all so dear to me, some in one respect, some in another, that I can leave no one of you unsaluted. Yet there is no better motive why I should love you than that you are scholars, learning seeming to bind me more strictly to you than nearness of blood. I hear that Mr. Nicholas is still with you, and that you have learned of him much astronomy, and that you have proceeded so far in this science that you now know, not only the pole-star, the dog, and such common constellations, but also, which argues you to be absolute and cunning astronomers, to be able to discern the sun from the moon. Go forward, then, in your new and admirable skill; and while you daily consider the stars with your eyes, let your minds also be in heaven, specially during this holy season of Lent."

The other letter is dated, "From the Court, September 1516:"

*“Thomas More to his best and beloved children, ana to Margaret Giggs, whom he numbereth among his own :*

“The merchant from Bristol brought me your letters, with the which I was exceedingly delighted, for there can come nothing, yea though never so rude and never so meanly polished, from this workshop of yours, but it procureth me more delight than other men’s doing, be they ever so eloquent.

“Your letters also please me very well for their own worth, being full of fine wit and of pure Latin phrase. There were none of them all but pleased me exceedingly; yet, to tell you ingenuously what I think, my son John’s letter pleaseth me best, both because it is longer than the others, as also because he seems to me to have taken more pains than the rest: for he not only pointeth out the matter becomingly, and speaketh elegantly, but he playeth also pleasantly with me, and returneth my jests upon me again very wittily; and this he doth, not only pleasantly, but temperately withal, showing that he is mindful with whom he jesteth, to wit his father, whom he endeavoureth so to delight that he is also afraid to offend. Hereafter I expect every day letters from each of you; neither will I accept of such excuses as you complain of,—that you had no leisure, or that the carrier went away suddenly, or that you have no matter to write. John is not wont to allege any such things, and nothing can hinder you from writing. Why should you lay any fault upon the carrier, seeing you may prevent his coming, and have them ready made up and sealed two days before any offer themselves to carry them? and how can you want matter of writing to me, who am delighted to hear either of your studies or your play? whom you may then please exceedingly, when having nothing to write of, you write as largely as you can of that nothing, than which nothing is more easy for you to do, especially being women, and therefore prattlers by nature, and amongst whom daily a great story riseth out of nothing. This, however, I admonish you, that whether you write of serious matters or of trifles, you write with diligence and attention, premeditating it before.”

In a letter to Master William Gunnell, the excellent preceptor whom he had chosen for his children, he clearly shows that, whatever his love of learned pursuits, he attached a yet higher value to humility and simplicity of heart.

“What doth the fame of being a great scholar bring us if it be severed from virtue, specially in a woman? It is the part not only of a proud man, but also of one most wretched and ridiculous, to frame his actions for other men’s praise; . . . and therefore have I entreated all my friends many times to persuade my children to this,—that, avoiding all the gulfs and downfalls of pride, they walk through the pleasant meadows of modesty, that they think no better of themselves for all their costly trimmings, nor any meaner for the want of them. Let them think virtue their chief happiness, and those good qualities the best to be learned which will avail them most,—namely, piety to God, charity to men, and humility in themselves. . . . And that this plague of vain-glory may the further be banished from my children, I do earnestly desire that you, my dear Gunnell, and their mother, and all their friends, would still sing this song unto them, and hammer it always into their heads, that vain-glory is abject and to be despised, neither is there any thing more worthy or excellent than that humble modesty which is so much praised by Christ.”

It is plain that in the midst of the weightiest affairs his thoughts were never absent from his home, and that nothing in its daily life was too small to deserve his interest. “Your letters,” he writes, “would have been more grateful to me if they had told me what your studies were, what is read among you every day, how pleasantly you talk together, what themes you make, and how you pass the day.” Another time he says, “Be persuaded that, in the midst of my troublesome cares and fatigues of business, there is nothing that recreates me so much as when I read of your labours.” When he was at home, he would often come into their schoolroom, examine their tasks, and encourage them to be diligent. “Children,” he would say, “remember that virtue and learning are the meat, and play but the sauce.” He lost no occasion of grounding

them in such principles of solid piety as might resist the trials to which he foresaw they would be exposed, and mingled many a sagacious warning in his accustomed strains of pleasantry. "It is no great matter," he once observed, "if you children get to heaven, seeing that every one counselleth you wisely, and you yourselves behold vice punished and virtue rewarded, and so you are carried up thither by your chins; but if you chance to see the day when no man shall give you good example, and when virtue is rather punished and vice rewarded, and *then* you stand fast, and cleave close to God,—then, on my life, though you be but half good, God will allow you for whole good." He never foolishly indulged them, nor would he suffer them to make much of trifling discomforts. "We must not look to go to heaven on feather-beds," he would say; "our Lord went thither by suffering, and the servant may not be in better case than the master." Personal vanity was a fault he could not endure in them, and he never passed over any indications of a love of dress and finery. "If," says his grandson, "he saw any of them take pains in dressing themselves, by wearing of uneasy garments, or stroking up their hair to give themselves high foreheads, he would tell them, that if God gave them not hell, He would do them a great injury, seeing they took more pains to please the world and the devil than many virtuous men did to please God." His example on this point harmonised with his words; for, far from giving in to the foppery of the day, he was even careless in his apparel, and left it to the charge of his servant, whom he playfully called his tutor, to provide him with clothes; so that when, as sometimes happened, the tutor was negligent, Sir Thomas's shoes were as likely as not to exhibit a spectacle of rents and patches. Erasmus says, that his lawyer's gown was generally awry on his shoulders, one of which often appeared higher than the other.

The care he bestowed on the education of his children was amply rewarded. The proficiency they attained in learning has been borne witness to by Erasmus, who dedicated some of his commentaries "To Sir Thomas More's



School;" whilst Grineus, a Protestant writer, to whom, however, More had shown some kindness, addressing his version of Plato to John More, takes occasion to allude to the acquirements of his sisters; who, he says, "are the example and admiration of the age, who see no learning above their reach, and no disputations of philosophy above their capacity." But there was one of the little company who surpassed the others in her gifts of mind, as she did also in her father's esteem. He loved all his children; but between him and his eldest daughter, Margaret, there existed a deep tie of sympathy and of mutual confidence, which rendered her at once the pride and the solace of his life. It is sufficient praise of this admirable woman to say that she was worthy of such a father; she was equally capable of appreciating his gifts of intellect and of grace, and her noble heart entered with enthusiasm into those lofty views and disinterested principles which his wife esteemed as no better, to use her own phrase, than "making goslings in the ashes." Her mental attainments must needs have been great, for they seem to have more than satisfied the requirement of her father, who, in the matter of learning, was not one to be content with mediocrity. He made her the companion of his studies, and confided to her the inmost secrets of his soul. He had never laid aside the practices of personal austerity commenced in early youth; but they were carefully concealed from all but her, and it was she alone who was accustomed, with her own hands, to wash the rough hair-shirt which he constantly wore.

The tenderness with which he addresses her in the few letters which have been preserved of their correspondence can scarcely be surpassed. Sometimes he addresses her in a tone of playful raillery. "You ask for money of your father," he writes, "without the slightest fear or shame; and, what is worse, the letter in which you ask it is of such a kind, that I cannot refuse your request, do what I will. Indeed, I could find it in my heart to recompense your letter, not as Alexander did by Choritus, giving him for every line a philippine of gold, but, if my pocket were as large as my will, I would bestow two crowns of the purest gold for every syllable of the same. Herein I send you

as much as you requested; I should have been willing to have sent more, but I like to have my pennyworth for my penny. As I bestow with pleasure, so am I desirous to be asked, and specially by you, Meg, whom virtue and learning have made so dear to me. So the sooner you have spent the money well, and the sooner you ask for more in as handsome a way as you did the last, know that the sooner you will do your father a singular pleasure." If we gather from some of these letters a high idea of the learning which could draw such encomiums from the lips of More, we find proofs also that in Margaret's case it was accompanied with a modesty and humility which made her yet worthier of his praise. It would seem that on one occasion he had received a letter from her when in company with Reginald Pole, then a young man, whose high promise endeared him to More, and who was admitted into close intimacy with the family circle. He could not resist the satisfaction of showing him the composition of his favourite daughter, and Pole, struck by the elegance and correctness of the Latin style, could scarce be made to believe that it really came from a lady's hand. This was touching More on a tender point; indifferent as he was to his own praise, he could not be equally stoical where his "darling Meg" was concerned; and in his answer to her he grumbles a little at the "hard hap" that men would not believe her writings to be her own, by very reason of their excellence. "But you, sweet Meg," he then continues, "are rather to be praised for this, that seeing you cannot hope for worthy praise of your labours, yet for all that you go forward, joining to your virtue the knowledge of most excellent sciences; and contenting yourself with your own pleasure in learning, you never hunt after vulgar praises, nor receive them willingly when they are offered. And for your singular piety and love towards me, you esteem me and your husband a sufficient and ample theatre for you to content you with." His fond partiality for the child whose mind he had formed and modelled from her cradle is sometimes expressed in most touching terms. "There was no reason," he writes, "my dearest of daughters, why thou shouldst have deferred writing to me lest

thy letters should be barren. For though they had been less curious, yet, in respect of thy sex, thou mightest have been pardoned by any man; *yea, even a blemish on the child's face seemeth often to a father beautiful.* But these thy letters, Meg, were so eloquently polished, that they had nothing in them to fear the most indulgent affection of thy father More." Margaret was, moreover, his almoner, and all his charities passed through her hands. Her time was by no means exclusively spent in cultivating the liberal sciences: she would not have been More's daughter if the claims of the sick and indigent had been neglected, even for dear philosophy; and we find mention of a house which he provided in Chelsea to receive the old and infirm persons of the parish, assigning a fixed sum for its maintenance, and placing the whole care of its superintendence on Margaret's conscience.

She married William Roper, who appears to have been admitted into the family of More even before their union, and who tells us that, during the sixteen years he spent under his father-in-law's roof, he never saw in him the least sign or token of anger. His adopted child, Margaret Giggs, bore testimony to the same effect, and was wont to pretend to have committed some trifling fault for the pleasure of hearing him chide her in his own way. His unruffled temper cast its own sunshine over those around him, and the petty misunderstandings which too often disturb and divide families were unknown under his roof. This happy result he brought about partly by his own sweet and gentle manner, and partly by a tact which could avoid or turn away the asperities of others. Thus, though his table was frequented by guests of all parties and opinions, and among the learned assembly, which often included the keen wits of university scholars, disputes and arguments were certain to arise, none ever knew them brought to an uncourteous termination; and More would sooner seem to be confuted in a controversy than allow his own temper or that of his friends to be in any degree disturbed.

There was, however, one member of his family by whom this meekness of disposition was sometimes tried to its ut-

termost, and this was his wife. Yet, if her scolding tongue proved too unruly a member to be controlled even by the suavity of her husband's temper, he succeeded in doing what few other men could have done, and turned the ebullitions of his wife's shrewishness into a matter of harmless pleasantry. She often rated him soundly for not putting himself forward in the world. "Tilly vally!" she would exclaim, "will you sit and make goslings in the ashes? My mother hath often said to me, It is better to rule than to be ruled." "Now of a truth, good wife," would he reply, "that is well said, for never did I find you willing to be ruled." Sometimes there were intervals of sunshine, however, in the good dame's temper. One day he met her with so unusually beaming a countenance, that he was fain to inquire the cause of the happy change. "Why so merry, Alice?" he said. "One may surely be merry," she replied; "for I have been to shrift, and have left my old shrewishness behind me in the confessional." "Ah!" he returned, with a dubious shake of the head, "I fear it is only to open a new score." The anonymous author of his life tells a story of his gravely reproving one of his friends whom he heard complaining that his wife was a shrew. "Nay, nay, my friend," he said, "you defame the good woman; there is but one shrew in the world, and, with reverence be it spoken, that is my own wife." "But," adds the same writer, "Sir Thomas so much bettered the state of mind of this wife of his, that I doubt not she is a saved soul, and that they now enjoy each other's company in heaven."

He tried by every means to sweeten her temper, and raise the tone of her mind; for her worldliness of disposition was even a more sensible grievance to him than her tartness of temper. In part he succeeded. Erasmus writes: "No husband ever gained so much obedience from a wife by authority and severity as More has done by gentleness and pleasantry. Though verging on old age, and not of a yielding temper, he has prevailed on her to take lessons on the lute, the cithara, the viol, and the flute, which she daily practises to him." This alarming list of music-lessons must have been somewhat of a penance to Dame

Alice's patience, to whom the whole circle of the sciences was less attractive than the duties of a saving housewife. Keen managing was her delight; her husband was wont to say of her, "that she was penny-wise and pound-foolish,—saving a candle's end, and spoiling a velvet gown." We fear it must be added that, spite of her lessons on the viol and monochord, she remained more or less of a scold to the last; and More was fain to utter his complaints in an epigram. This was not the only one of More's lighter pieces in which we find allusions to his domestic life. A Latin epistle in verse, addressed by him to his children during one of his many absences from home, has been preserved, of considerable poetical merit. The pictures of his nursery and his schoolroom were present to his mind's eye during a journey whose discomforts and distractions he somewhat piteously describes. The stumbling steed, the pouring rain, the miry roads, all find a place in his verses; and through it all, he tells us, he kept his seat, and went on rhyming as fast as it rained, his thoughts the while occupied with the welcome they would give on his return to his cakes and apples, his pretty finery, and his fond father's kiss. Then he reminds them how slow he has ever been to flog them over their books, and tells us that the "infrequent rod" was composed of no severer material than a bunch of peacock's feathers.

A yet more exquisite picture, from his own pen, of his familiar hours at home occurs in one of his letters to Peter Giles, an Antwerp friend, which he sent accompanied with a copy of his *Utopia*. "Whilst in pleading," he says, "in hearing or deciding causes, or composing disputes as an arbitrator, in waiting on some men about business, and on others out of respect, the greater part of the day is spent on other men's affairs; the remainder of it must be given to my family at home, so that I can reserve no part of it to myself, that is, to study. I must gossip with my wife and chat with my children, and find something to say to my servants; for all these things I reckon a part of my business, unless I were to become a stranger in my own house: for with whomsoever either nature or choice has engaged a man in any relation of life, he must endeavour



to make himself as acceptable as he can. In such occupations, days, months, and years slip away; and what time, think you, is left for writing? without saying any thing of what is wasted in sleep and meals, which consume nearly half our lives."

But even the time spent at table, which More here so pathetically regrets, was contrived by him so as to be of some profit. No man had a greater love of refined and rational conversation; but none ever showed himself a greater enemy to gossip or mischievous trifling. To guard against this evil, he always had some instructive book read during dinner-time which might furnish matter for discourse when the reading was finished. As to detraction, he never suffered it in his presence, and hesitated not to put a stop to its first beginnings by an abrupt change of the subject. Well might Erasmus say that such a house was entitled to be called a practical school of Christianity. More made it so by his exhortations, as well as by his example: he very frequently addressed his family and servants in a brief and moving way, as one who bore the authority of a father; and during Holy Week he was accustomed to call them into the chapel, where he would have the Passion of our Lord read aloud out of the Gospels, now and then interposing remarks of his own to move them to compassion and compunction.

In one respect Dame Alice appears to have had some grounds of just complaint against her husband, and that was on a subject on which she was doubtless keenly sensitive. More was not a thrifty man: although, before his entrance into the king's service, he enjoyed a professional income equivalent to 5000*l.* a year of our money, and although the court and civic offices which he held after that period were all lucrative, yet he never saved a penny; and on his resignation of the great seal, in 1532, he was reduced to actual penury. In fact, so long as he possessed any thing to give, it belonged as much to the Church and the poor as it did to himself. His delight was in giving rather than in receiving. "There was nothing," says Rastell, one of his biographers, "that pleased and comforted him so **much** as when he could do some good deed

or other to his neighbour, by relieving him by his counsel, his kind word, or his money. When at Chelsea, he would ramble about the lanes and byways alone, secretly giving alms to the necessitous villagers, whom he sought out in this way, with a liberality whose extent was known to God alone." The south chancel of Chelsea Church was rebuilt by his munificence, and furnished with a beautiful service of altar-plate; and his gift was accompanied with one of those remarks, so almost prophetic in their character, which often fell from him: "Good men," he said, "give these things, and bad men take them away." We know but of one incident in his life which represents him to us as taking any pains on matters of pecuniary interest; and even then, if it must be said, he made it the occasion of a pun. He had lent a sum of money to a friend, who showed no disposition to repay it. At last, he ventured to give a gentle hint on the subject; when, instead of discharging his debt, the borrower thought fit to treat Sir Thomas to a moral discourse on the contempt of riches. He reminded him that we must not set our heart on money, that the time of our sojourn here is short, and that it behoves us all to remember the maxim, *Memento morieris* ("Remember that thou shalt die"). "There you have it exactly," answered More; "follow up your maxim, my friend: *Memento Mori æris* ("Remember More's money").

As to carefulness about the future, however, or the skilful improvement of opportunities for making a fortune, he was incapable of it. Every line of his writings, every word that fell from his lips, bespoke a habit of mind which had thoroughly accustomed itself to dwell on the next world as the only reality, and on the present life as merely a waiting season, whose tediousness he sought to while away by a pleasant humour, but which, save in its relation to what lay beyond, was utterly worthless in his eyes. And thus it had become impossible for him to think and act as other men do, or to treat the question of riches or poverty with any thing more serious than a jest. He valued the goods of earth as though he had already crossed the vast abyss, and were looking on them from the other

world,—like the souls whom he himself describes in purgatory as thinking of the sacks of gold which they have left behind them, much as an old man would think of a bag of cherry-stones which as a child he had hidden in a corner to play with. Life was to him so truly a pilgrimage, that it had come to be a thing of wonder to him how any man who, as he says, “is travelling to his own home, where he shall have abundance of all things, can think it worth his while to turn ostler in an inn by the wayside, and so die in a stable.” “The richest lord and the greatest prince,” he would say, “is but a man in a gray gown, after all; he shall lie low in the dust of the land he is so proud of, and the world will never hear of him more.”

It is, indeed, worthy of remark, that More, whose wit and love of jesting were so notorious, never writes with such profound pathos and convincing earnestness as when his subjects are the eternal truths. His treatise on our last end might have come from the lips of a Carmelite friar, or an ancient solitary of the desert. It is, as it were, saturated with the deep, solemn conviction of the nothingness of all things; and the very humour of the author, which in his most earnest moments it was impossible for him to repress, is exercised only to show that the baubles of earth deserve nothing from an immortal soul save to be despised and ridiculed.

Under his gay social exterior he concealed the spirit of a true contemplative; he followed its practices, and, we may add, that in some degree he shared its privileges. He was a man of prayer; amid all his business he found time for the daily recitation of our Lady's office, the Penitential and Gradual Psalms, and other devotions. But these vocal prayers formed but a small portion of his daily intercourse with God; and many were the hours he stole from sleep to give to secret meditation. Two instances are given of a marked answer granted to his prayers; the one was on the occasion of the illness of his daughter Margaret, whose life being despaired of by the physicians. “her father,” says Cresacre, “as he that most loved her, in no small heaviness, at last sought for remedy from God. Wherefore going, as his custom was, into his new building,

there in the chapel, kneeling devoutly, and with many tears, he besought Almighty God, to whom nothing was impossible, of His goodness, if it were His blessed will, graciously to vouchsafe to grant this his humble petition : and presently there came into his mind, that a glyster was the only way to help her ; which, when he told the physicians, they confessed it was the best remedy, marvelling themselves that they had not remembered it." The malady under which she was suffering was the terrible epidemic known as the sweating sickness, in the dangerous stage of which the patient could in no way be kept from sleep. The remedy suggested by More was accordingly administered to her while she was still sleeping ; and soon afterwards she awoke, and to the amazement of every one was, in a short space, and, as it seemed, almost miraculously, restored to perfect health. More protested, in the extremity of his anguish, that should it please God to take this " his jewel," he should thenceforth never more meddle in business of this world ; while she, in her turn, ascribed her recovery to her father's fervent prayers.

The other case, in which his prayers were in a very special manner blessed and answered, concerned his son-in-law, William Roper, who in his youth embraced some of the wild novelties of the day ; and, says Cresacre, " beginning to read some of the heretical books spread then in every part of England, grew so vehement in his new opinions, that he would be always talking what a ready way to heaven was now found out, no one needing to have recourse any more to the saints," and that faith only was necessary to salvation ; in the confident possession of which, he assured himself that he was an elect soul, and that it was now impossible for him to fall out of God's favour. Full of these fine fancies, he one day came to Sir Thomas, and requested him to obtain for him from the king a license to preach what the Spirit had taught him, inasmuch as God had given him a command to instruct the world. More was annoyed at his absurdity. " Now, is it not sufficient, son Roper," he said, " that we, who are your friends, should know that you are a fool, but you must have your folly proclaimed to all the world ?" He

did his best, however, by argument and dispute to bring him to reason; but when he found all he could say of no avail, he determined on another course. "I see very well," he said, "that every day you do but grow more obstinate, and that no disputation will do you good; henceforth, therefore, I dispute with you no more, but shall only pray that God may touch your heart;" and so they parted. He was as good as his word; from that time he never contended with him in argument, but gave himself to earnest and incessant prayer that God in His mercy would dispel the illusions under which his son-in-law was labouring. "And behold," says Cresacre, "my uncle, not long after, inspired by the light of grace, began to detest his heresies, and was, like another St. Austin, entirely converted; so that he lived and died a stout and valiant champion of the faith."

We would not, however, attach any necessarily supernatural character either to these facts, or to the many instances to be found in his life of what seems almost a spirit of prophecy. A man whose heart is utterly free and disengaged, can view what goes on around him with very different eyes from those who are absorbed in the thick of the *mêlée*, and can of course see both farther and more truly than they do. It is certain, that long before other men dreamt of the woes which were coming on the English Church, More had discerned the rising of the cloud "like a man's hand," visible to his eye alone, and fraught with death and destruction. Walking once with his son-in-law, long before any of the questions had arisen which resulted in the separation of England from the centre of Catholic unity, Roper began to praise the happy state of the kingdom; having, as he said, so Catholic a prince, so virtuous and learned a clergy, so grave and sound a nobility, and such loyal loving subjects knit together in one faith. "It is true, son Roper," he replied; "and yet I pray God that some of us, as high as we seem to sit on the mountains, treading heretics under our feet like ants, may not live to see the day when we would gladly make this composition with them,—to let them have their churches quietly to themselves, so they will be content to let us have ours." Roper



urged the unreasonableness of such fears. "Well," he repeated, "I pray God none of us may live to see the day." "To whom," continues his son-in-law, "I repeated, 'By my troth, sir, it is very desperately spoken.' But he, perceiving me to be in a passion, said soothingly unto me, 'Well then, son Roper, it shall not be so, it shall not be so.'"

In speaking of the family of More, we must not omit his venerable father, who survived to witness his son's elevation to the highest dignity in the state. When Sir Thomas filled the office of chancellor, his father, then ninety years of age, but still vigorous in mind and body, continued to discharge the duties of senior puisne judge in the Court of King's Bench. Every day during term-time, before the chancellor opened business in his own court, he was accustomed to go into the Court of King's Bench, and there, kneeling before his father, to ask and receive his blessing. He died the year following his son's promotion to the chancellorship, and was attended by him on his death-bed with the utmost tenderness. "The chancellor," says Cresacre, "would oftentimes with kindly words come to visit him; and at his departure, with tears, taking him about the neck, most lovingly kissed him, and commended his soul into the merciful hands of God." His portrait appears in the beautiful picture painted by Holbein of the entire family group; a copy of which was sent by More to Erasmus, and still hangs in the town-hall at Basle. Holbein had been originally introduced to him by his friend; who sent by the painter's hand his own portrait, together with his letter of introduction. He thus expresses his delight on receiving in return the portraits of More and his whole "school" in a letter to Margaret Roper. "I want words," he says, "to express my delight in contemplating the picture of your family which Holbein has so happily executed. If I were in the presence of the originals, I could not have a more accurate idea of them. I see you all before me, but no one more strikingly than yourself; in whose features shine those mental accomplishments, those domestic virtues, which have rendered you the ornament of your country and of your age."

The features of More are probably familiar to most of

our readers. Even the most ordinary prints retain the same general character; and it is certainly that of no ordinary man. The dignity and gravity of the upper portion of the face, the massive brow, and calm penetrating eye, betoken the philosopher and statesman; whilst the unruffled sweetness of his disposition, the temper that took all things for the best, and the light-hearted gaiety which smiled even on the scaffold, are written on the lines of a mouth which seems as though it could not look severe. It is thus he is represented in this celebrated picture, the original of which is preserved in Nostell Priory in Yorkshire, and possesses a value which probably attaches to no other painting of a similar character.

To complete the portraiture of the domestic circle at Chelsea, it should have included some of those who were admitted into close and affectionate intimacy with More and his family. Erasmus himself; Cuthbert Tunstal, the mutual friend of both these great men; the holy and courageous Fisher; and Reginald Pole, then a youth, who in later years was wont to boast that he was prouder of his friendship with More and Fisher than of his familiarity with any prince in Christendom,—these and many other illustrious names are to be found in the catalogue of the friends of Sir Thomas More; and his letters to them bear witness to the singular tenderness which united them all together in one common affection. It seems to have been the peculiar office and delight of Erasmus to introduce to him every person of merit and learning whom he thought worthy of the friendship of More. Cranvild and Conrad Glocenius were both made known to him in this way; and the letter which the latter brought with him, by way of introduction, alludes in a pleasant manner to the peculiar disposition of More to contract these friendships. “I know, my dearest More,” writes the great scholar, “that your delight is to be rich in faithful friends, and that in this you reckon to consist your greatest earthly happiness. For the delight which other men take in cards, dice, chess, hunting, and music, is less than what you find in intercourse with a learned and congenial companion. And so, though I know you are well stored with this kind of riches,

yet because I know a covetous man can never have enough, and that this manner of dealing of mine has before now chanced luckily both to you and to me, I deliver to your keeping one friend more, whom I would have you accept with your whole heart. As soon as you know him, I look to be thanked by you both, as I was by Cranvild, who now so possesses your love that I am well-nigh envious of him." He alludes here to the letter in which both Cranvild and More thanked him for having made them known to one another; Cranvild styling "the acquaintance and sweet conversation" of More benefits he would not exchange for the wealth of Cræsus; whilst More, on his part, declares that as often as he thinks of Cranvild's love and courtesy, "it shakes from him all sorrow;" and that he knows no other remedy for the shortness of his new friend's letters than to read them again and again. There was one other member of More's family whom, as introduced into Holbein's picture, and thought worthy of being mentioned by all biographers, we must not pass over without notice. This was Harry Patenson the jester, whom More himself has helped to immortalise by introducing him into his answer to Tindal and Barnes; where, with his accustomed humour, he compares some of their arguments to the absurdities of the poor fool, whom he calls "a man of special wit, but unlike the common sort." Patenson was a faithful servant, and sufficiently a favourite to be indulged with the privilege of speaking his mind on all occasions. Sometimes, however, his jokes went a little too far; and his manner of retrieving such blunders may be gathered from an anecdote which we will give in More's own words. "Yesterday, whilst we were dining," he writes, "Patenson, seeing a guest with a very large nose, said that there was one at table who had been trading to the promontory of noses. All eyes were turned towards the great nose; though we discreetly observed silence, that the good man might not be abashed. Patenson, perceiving that he had made a mistake, tried to set himself right, and said, 'He lies who says the gentleman's nose is large, for on the faith of a true knight it is rather a small one.' At this, all being inclined to laugh, I made signs for the fool to be turned

out of the room. But Patenson, who boasts that he can bring every affair he has commenced to a happy conclusion, resisted ; and placing himself in my seat at the head of the table, said aloud with my voice and gesture, ‘There is one thing I would have you to know : that gentleman there *has not the least bit of nose upon his face.*’”

Such was the domestic circle in which More passed the happy period of his life whilst he was still independent of the court. Its felicity was in some degree interrupted when continual attendance on the king’s person, or on the duties of his political office, rendered his absences from home longer and more frequent ; but its character was ever the same, and during the trials and sorrows of his closing career his daughter Margaret could look back for consolation upon the memory of its unruffled tranquillity. “What think you,” she wrote, “doth comfort us at Chelsea in your absence, my most dear father ? Surely the remembrance of your manner of life passed here among us, your holy conversation, your wholesome counsels, and your examples of virtue.” In days when the influence of the Catholic faith penetrated into every part of society, hallowing its commonest details, such Christian homes as these were lovely pictures, on which men’s eyes were often privileged to rest. But the time was fast approaching when, in England at least, the principle which gave them all their beauty was to disappear from the land. The office hitherto held by the Catholic Church was to be assumed by Puritanism, and whatever of religious feeling survived the shock of revolution was ere long to be put into the chains of a rigid formalism ; which had no better idea of sanctifying domestic ties than by stripping them of every innocent enjoyment, and confusing together the very notions of recreation and of sin. When Puritanism passed away, it left as its fatal legacy the separation of religion from ordinary life ; and those English households which, under the guardianship of the faith, could at once admit the genial and hearty enjoyment of all God’s gifts and graces together with a strict rule of devotion and mortification, were given over to be fashioned and regulated by worldly conventionalisms and the tyranny of human respect.

## CHAPTER III.

More's employment under the king. His foreign embassies. He is appointed Speaker of the Commons. Demand for a subsidy. Wolsey visits the House. Manner of his reception. Wolsey's anger. More chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. Rise of the Lutheran heresy. Fisher of Rochester. King Henry's *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*. More enters into controversy. Anxiety felt by Fisher and More.

It was probably in the year 1517 that More received from the king the honour of knighthood. For the next five years he was chiefly employed in foreign missions and embassies ; sometimes to France, and more frequently to the Netherlands, which then formed part of the dominions of Henry's great contemporary the Emperor Charles V. He was present at the celebrated meeting between the French and English monarchs on the "Field of the Cloth-of-gold," when he appeared as orator for the occasion, as he also did on the visit of the emperor to England two years later. His powers of extemporary eloquence were constantly taxed in one way or another ; for when at home he had to attend the king during all his royal progresses, and especially to the universities, where he was always appointed to reply to the addresses of the various learned bodies. University disputations and witty speeches were, however, much more to his taste than the wearisome political intrigues in which he was compelled to take part in the course of his foreign embassies. The whole policy of the courts of France, Germany, and England, appeared to consist in ceaseless efforts to outwit one another ; and that in a way so profitless and petty, that More could find no better term for it than a "busy trifling." "Nothing," he says, in a letter to Erasmus written at Calais in 1518, "can be more odious to me than this legation : I am here banished at a miserable seaport, whose earth and air are equally disagreeable to me." His whole soul, simple and straightforward as it was, revolted at the cunning and insincerity to which he was made a party. His own principles of honour and truthfulness were pretty much identical with those which he has put in the mouth of Raphael Hythloday ; so un-



compromising as to be deemed by the world around him as romantic and unpractical, and fit only for his own *Utopia*. According to his favourite plan, he has, in the first book of that celebrated work, made its hero give utterance to his own sentiments in a supposed dialogue with himself. He represents himself as urging on his friend worldly-wise arguments as to the proper line of conduct to be pursued by those who frequent the courts of princes. "You must use address," he says, "and manage things as dexterously as you can; so that if unable to make them go well, they may go as little ill as possible; for unless all men were perfect, such an order of things as you would desire we cannot hope to see." "Then," replies Hythloday, "according to you, all I could do would be to prevent myself from running mad while endeavouring to cure the madness of others. But I do not comprehend what you mean by your address and your dexterous management. If I speak the truth, I can say but what I have said; and as for lying, whether a philosopher can do it or no I know not; all I can say is, that I am sure I cannot."

His frequent absence from England on these affairs at length rendered it necessary for him to resign his office of under-sheriff of the City, which he did with much reluctance, for its duties were more agreeable to him than those in which he was now engaged. However, he was soon afterwards raised to a dignity for which he was better qualified, being appointed in the year 1523 Speaker of the House of Commons. This appointment, according to the custom which then prevailed, was made at the king's recommendation, or rather dictation; it is probable that Wolsey was not without his fears as to the course which might be taken by a man whose principles were known to incline to the popular cause, and whose sturdy independence of character had before now been made manifest. As an opponent of government he might become formidable; but the wily minister no doubt trusted that, as a crown-favourite and nominee, his hands would in a great measure be tied. A Speaker of the Commons was in those days a very influential person; and, unlike the modern official, often earned his right to the title by taking great part of the talking

business of the House to himself. When, according to etiquette, he had to plead disability for the office, he did so before the king and the House of Lords in characteristic fashion, by telling them a story. When Phormio the philosopher desired Hannibal to come to his lectures, and he consented and came, Phormio began to read a treatise on military affairs; whereupon Hannibal called him but a fool, to speak to him on matters concerning which he knew more than his teacher. "And so," continued More, "if I presume to speak to the king of learning and the well-ordering of the government, the king, who is a master in such things, may chance to say to me as Hannibal to Phormio." It is probable that in this compliment to Henry's abilities More intended to convey a hint that his counsels on the subject of government might not always be to the royal taste; but his objections were overruled; and, being confirmed in his office, he at once delivered a speech in which, if the language be, after the manner of the times, somewhat servile to royalty, he yet manages to plead for liberty of speech with unwonted boldness in a Speaker under the Tudor dynasty, veiling his audacity under an amusing strain of apology for the rudeness and boisterousness of the more unpolished members of the Lower House.

A very few days sufficed to show that court patronage had no power to corrupt the new Speaker, and to make Wolsey more than half repent the step he had taken. On pretence of the contemplated war with the emperor, a subsidy was demanded from the Commons of no less than the enormous sum of 800,000*l.*, which they declared to be more than the current coin of the whole realm. Its necessity they admitted; but pleaded with piteous simplicity that the nation, for want of money, must relapse into barbarism. More endeavoured to soothe their alarms on this score by propounding rather more enlightened views on the subject of political economy, and explaining to them that their merchandise and commodities would secure them against such a danger. But in the course of the debate it would seem the members made unusually free use of that liberty of speech recently demanded for them by their Speaker; and Wolsey himself became the object of their

**animadversions.** When the news reached the ears of the minister that the Commons had dared to have opinions of their own, and to express them in a manner which threatened even to end in a refusal of the subsidy, he was greatly displeased, and formally complained to the House of Lords that every thing which was spoken in parliament was now talked of in the alehouses. He then resolved to try the effect of a personal visit to the Lower House, which he hoped to overcome by his presence. No doubt he trusted also that he should meet with no opposition from a Speaker of his own nomination ; but in this at least he was mistaken. When the intelligence was brought that the lord cardinal was coming down to the House with his numerous train of servants and retainers, the quick wit of Sir Thomas immediately detected a way of getting out of the threatened scrape. The cardinal had complained of the breach of privilege committed by the publishing abroad of parliamentary debates ; if therefore any report of that day's proceedings should excite his further displeasure, More resolved that the fault should be laid on his own followers, and declared his mind to the House. "My masters," he said, as they debated as to the propriety of receiving him with so lordly a retinue, "forasmuch as ye wot well that my lord cardinal hath lately laid to our charge the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this House, I think it not amiss to receive him with all his pomp, with his maces, his pillars, his poleaxes, his hat, and his great seal too ; and so, if he find the like fault on us hereafter, we may lay the blame on those whom his grace bringeth with him." Moreover he got them to agree as to their method of defence, which was to be simply that of keeping silence, according to the established rule that the House is only bound to communicate with others by the mouth of its Speaker. Having thus closed the lips of those who might have made an indiscreet reply to the remonstrances of the cardinal, he gave orders for his instant admission, having no fears but that he himself should be able to find a ready means of repelling the intrusion without giving any just occasion of offence.

Wolsey was accordingly admitted with all his follow-

ers, and addressed the House in a solemn oration, wherein he made plainly known to them, that less than the subsidy proposed would not serve the king's purpose; and, having spoken at some length, finding that none seemed ready to answer him, or in any manner to signify their compliance with his request, he found it necessary at length so far to condescend as to demand some reply. "My masters," he said, "you have many wise and learned men among you, and, since I am sent to you from the king's person for the weal of the realm, I think it not unmeet that you should give me some reasonable answer." They all, however, held their peace; and the chancellor had nothing for it but to interrogate them individually. "How say you, Master Marney?" he said, addressing one of the members. who making him no reply, he asked the same question of several others; but none of them gave him for answer so much as a single word. Wolsey, baffled at all points, felt the undignified position in which he had placed himself by his contempt of the privileges of the House; but he trusted that in the Speaker at least he should find one more pliant to his will. "My masters," he said, in a tone of ill-suppressed vexation, "unless it be the manner of your House in such cases to utter your mind by the mouth of your Speaker, whom you have chosen for trusty and wise (as indeed he is), here is, without doubt, a marvellously obstinate silence." On this appeal to the Speaker, Sir Thomas rose; and kneeling down, according to the habit of the time in the presence of either the king or his chief ministers, he excused the silence of the Commons on the plea of ancient privilege, and failed not to defend this their liberty, and to prove their claim to it, both by argument and precedent; after which he showed that to him alone, as their Speaker, they had given the charge to make answer to his grace; but yet, except every one of them could put their several wits into his one head, he alone in so weighty a matter was all unmeet to give any reply to the demands made unto them by his grace.

Submissive as was his language and his manner, Wolsey plainly enough understood from these words that the Commons, under the direction of their courageous Speaker,

were determined, in this instance at least, to maintain their rights; and, highly incensed at the failure of his project, he rose abruptly, and quitted the House. On his departure the debate was resumed, and continued for no less than sixteen days; at the end of which time a subsidy was voted of exactly half the sum demanded, to be paid by instalments. The rage both of Wolsey and the king at this resistance to their will knew no bounds: contrary to all law and usage, they compelled the payment of the whole subsidy at once, and no parliament was summoned again for the space of seven years. When next More and the cardinal met, it was in the great gallery of York Place; the session had then closed, but Wolsey could not restrain a passionate allusion to his disappointment. "I wish to God, Mr. More," he said, "that you had been at Rome when I made you Speaker." But More, who had not been overawed by his power, was certainly not one to be disturbed by his violence. "Your grace not offended, so would I too," he replied with his usual easy equanimity; "for then I should have seen a place I have long desired to visit:" and not suffering the vexatious question to be renewed, he began to admire the gallery, and to compare its proportions with that at Hampton Court. This was the beginning of a jealousy on the part of Wolsey which yet never occasioned an open breach between them. In truth, the extreme simplicity of Sir Thomas, and the quiet indifference with which he treated tokens of displeasure which would have made any other courtier tremble, in no small degree baffled the mighty cardinal, who had been accustomed to deal with men whose very souls seemed to hang upon his favour. Even when most enraged at the independent opposition of his colleague, he knew not how to master him, and was not insensible to something very like fear of his integrity. He would willingly have got rid of him, had he been able; and suggested to Henry the propriety of employing so wise and able a councillor in the adjustment of the matters at issue between him and the emperor. A Spanish embassy would, he conceived, be an honourable way of consigning his rival to oblivion; and the king at first appeared to approve of the proposal.



But More had little inclination to be again condemned to banishment, and petitioned the king to be excused on the score of health. Henry saw through the artifice of his minister, and was easily persuaded to retain near him a man who daily gained more hold on his affections; and not long after (December 1525), as a further token of esteem, he bestowed on him the office of chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; "a dignity," says Erasmus, "which he obtained neither by aspiring to it nor by soliciting it, but by the simple favour of his prince."

The council-table of Henry must often at that time have been the scene of somewhat amusing contentions; the astuteness of Wolsey was continually finding its match in the simple honesty of his colleague, and it was in vain for him to endeavour to trample down or overbear a man who, do what you would with him, contrived to make a jest of your very efforts to extinguish him. Thus, on one occasion, when the cardinal had drawn up a draft of certain conditions of peace between France and Spain, and pressed for Sir Thomas's opinion, bidding him state fearlessly if there were any part of it which he did not like, Sir Thomas, believing him sincere, honestly replied by pointing out more than one particular in which the document might, to his thinking, be amended. This was too much for Wolsey's pride, and bursting into a rage, "By the Mass!" he exclaimed, "thou art the veriest fool of all the council." "God be thanked," replied More, with his imperturbable smile, "that the king our master hath but one fool in all his council." It was thus he kept his footing, not only with the king, but, in spite of his jealousy, even with Wolsey himself, who felt it as impossible to hate as it was to subdue him; and, little as he could comprehend or appreciate such a character as More's, he was forced on more than one occasion to bear it the testimony of his respect.

Meanwhile a new subject of interest was beginning to agitate the minds of men in every country of Europe, and in the disputes arising out of it More was destined to take his share. The so-called Reformation had begun; and Luther, commencing only with the condemnation of supposed practical abuses, had at length bid defiance to the

Church herself, and had denounced the supreme Pontiff as "an apostate and Antichrist, and a blasphemer of the divine Word."

The essential doctrines of the Church now became the object of his attack, which every where excited the zeal and indignation of the champions of the faith. In England, Fisher, the heroic Bishop of Rochester, took the lead in defence of the Catholic dogmas with all the boldness and uncompromising vigour which he ever displayed. Yet how little of harshness or intolerance mingled with his zeal may be gathered from a story told in his life of his behaviour when, as chancellor of the University of Cambridge, it became his duty to visit with ecclesiastical censures one who had directed public contempt against the Papal indulgences. Twice was the convocation convened to consider the question, and twice did Fisher take in his hands the bill of excommunication; but each time tears choked his utterance, and he could not read it. At length, the third time, "arming himself," says his biographer, "with a severe gravity as well as he could, he read the sentence from the beginning to the end; which being done, with a kind of passionate compassion, he threw the bill on the ground, and lifting his eyes to heaven, he sat down and wept." It is a pleasure to add, that the offender was in this instance won back by the charity of his judge; he voluntarily made reparation for his fault, and, becoming a priest, continued for the remainder of his life unshaken in his fidelity to the Church.

Fisher's sermons at St. Paul's Cross in vindication of the doctrines attacked by Luther and his associates drew together vast crowds; and few who beheld the enthusiastic multitudes applauding the eloquence of the saintly Bishop, and the stately procession of the cardinal-legate, who attended in person, in company with the other prelates and the ambassadors from the imperial and Papal courts, would have predicted that, in spite of this show of Catholic loyalty, the plague-spot of apostasy was soon to break out over the land. The king himself gave an extraordinary token of his zeal by taking up the controversial cudgels with his own royal hand. In the October of 1521 ap-

peared his celebrated *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, a work in which he undertook to refute the errors of Luther, and which he submitted to the approbation of the reigning Pontiff, assuring him that he was as ready to oppose the heretics with his sword as with his pen. His exact share in the authorship of this work is hard to determine; most persons believed that the principal arguments were from the pen of the Bishop of Rochester; whilst we know, from More's own admission, that he assisted in collecting and arranging the contents of the volume. However that may have been, it gained for Henry a Papal bull, conferring on him the title of the "Defender of the faith," and a "reply" from Luther, written in his coarsest and most scurrilous strain. The character of this reply was such as to scandalise his best friends; and, in the year following its publication, More undertook to answer him after his own fashion, in a *Vindication of King Henry VIII.*, which was printed at Rome under the feigned name of Rosseus. Concerning this book Cresacre says, that "to see how he handleth his adversary would do any man good;" but it is probable that few readers would be found to give a similar opinion. It only too closely followed the style and language of his opponents; so that Bishop Atterbury was able to say of the two controversialists, that they had the best knack of any men in Europe at calling bad names in good Latin. Probably, with such an antagonist, and after such provocation, More felt himself under no obligation to keep his wit under restraint, but battered his adversary with his own weapons,—weapons, however, which were altogether unworthy of being wielded by such a hand as his.

This appears to have been the first of his controversial writings; and its character was the more to be regretted, because his learning and familiarity with theological science fitted him for a far higher description of controversy. It has been remarked of him, that whenever in any of his writings he touches on doctrinal matters, he treats them with an exactness which betokens a mind accustomed to the niceties of theological distinctions. His intimate acquaintance with the scholastic writers is evident from many circumstances: thus his secretary, John Harris, has described

how, going with him in his barge one day from Chelsea to London, he perceived him examining a certain heretical book lately published. "See here," he said at length, pointing to a passage with his finger, "the knave has taken all his arguments out of St. Thomas in such a place; but the answers are added presently after, only them he has not noticed." And Cresacre mentions his disputations with the queen's confessor on certain points controverted among the Franciscan doctors, with all of whom he showed himself to be perfectly well acquainted. In this he was as a Catholic layman by no means singular; for in those days scholastic divinity often formed a favourite study with the more learned of the laity. It had been so with Henry himself, and his proficiency in this branch of learning had acquired for him from Luther the polite nickname of the "Thomistical ass." It is, therefore, no wonder that More, whose inclinations had originally been directed towards the cloister, should have become somewhat of a scientific theologian; nevertheless it is certain that, in most of his answers to the heretics, the weapons which he uses with the greatest effect are those of satire. His contemporaries said of him, that "he wore a feather in his cap, and wagged it too often." His vindication of himself from this charge deserves quotation, if only as a sample of his humorous style. "My opponents," he says, "find fault because I handle these folk so foully. But if in writing they do ill and blaspheme, how can I speak them fair? But then they say, the peacemaker calleth no man by such names: speak he never so ill of any, he speaketh to each man genteelly. I cannot say nay. Howbeit every man hath not like wit, nor like invention in writing. My opponent findeth many proper ways of uttering evil matter in good words which I never thought upon. For myself, I am a plain, simple body, much like the Macedonians, of whom Plutarch writes how Philip their master once excused them. When they were at war, some of their enemies fled from their own king, and came over to Philip against their own country. The Macedonians once fell to words with these men, and called them 'traitors;' whereupon they complained to King Philip that, whereas they

had not only left their native country, but did also fight against it, and help to destroy it, for the love and service they bare him, yet his own people hesitated not in anger and despite to call them traitors. But King Philip answered them: 'Good fellows, I pray you be not angry with my people, but have patience. I am sorry that their manner is no better; but know this, that their nature is so plain, and their speech so rude, that they cannot call a horse any thing but a horse.' . . . And in sooth like those good folk am I also. I am neither so versed in poetry or in rhetoric as to find good names for evil things; and, as the Macedonians could call a traitor nothing but a traitor, so can I call a heretic nothing but a heretic." In fact, his overflowing humour indulged itself without control when showing up the absurdities of such men as Barnes and Tindal, in dealing with whom he felt that graver argument would be altogether out of place; saying of them, that a woman of ordinary wit, who had no more learning than sufficed to read her mother tongue, could easily confound a doctor of the new divinity.

He had, however, a graver way of looking on the spread of heretical opinions, and was accustomed sorrowfully to predict a result which others would not anticipate. With the feeling of a true Catholic, he shrank from the spirit of criticism which he saw every where pervading the popular mind. "Before a great storm," he would say, "the sea oftentimes swells and has strange motions, when no wind is stirring; even so I see many Englishmen, who, a few years ago, could not endure the name of heretic or Lutheran, now very well content to suffer them; yea, and somewhat to praise them too, and to learn with them to find fault with the Church, the clergy, the ceremonies, and the very Sacraments themselves." At this very period, when the credit of England as a Catholic power stood higher than that of any other European country, when her chief minister of state was aspiring to the triple tiara, and the consecrated rose, that special token of the Sovereign Pontiff's favour, had been sent to Henry as to the loyal-est prince of Christendom, More's heart was heavy with the presage of coming evil, and his clear penetrating eye



pierced through the glittering exterior which veiled a fatal and deeply-seated disease. There was, indeed, a cardinal-legate in England; but to the soul of More, so full of an earnest simplicity, it was a bitter mockery to gaze at the pompous display of those pole-axes, and pillars, and golden cushions, and golden shoes, to which he had so sarcastically alluded\* from the Speaker's chair, and to know that the gaudy trappings with which England in outward show paid her homage to the Church did but furnish the new teachers with their most powerful weapons of attack. And so, whilst the world stood agape, day after day witnessing some fresh display of ecclesiastical magnificence, whilst the golden censers swung in the streets of London to welcome the entry of Henry and his imperial visitor Charles V., and every house glittered with the golden inscriptions which proclaimed on all sides the presence of these two Catholic monarchs, "Henry of the *faith*, and Charles of the *Church*, defenders,"—there were those who gazed at it all with melancholy eyes, as they thought of scandals uncared for and unredressed, and knew full well that, to use the words of

\* More was not the only one who made these unfortunate articles of ecclesiastical finery the mark for his wit. The crosses and pillars of the cardinal find a place in almost every satirical effusion of the day. They were preached against at Cambridge by Barnes; they were rhymed against by Cavendish in his metrical *Life of Wolsey*:

"My crossis twayne of silver long and greate  
That dayly before me were carried hyghe,  
Upon greate horses in the open streett,  
And massie pyllars gloryouse to the eye,  
With pole axes gylt, that no man durst come nyghe  
My presence, I was so princely to behold,  
Ryding on my mule trapped in silver and golde."

In fact, Wolsey had the love of display of a true *parvenu*; and, to use his own phrase when reproving the audacity of the aforesaid Barnes, thereby made himself most "jollily laughed to scorn." It was in vain to endeavour by reproofs and admonitions to repress these witticisms whilst their exciting cause was not removed. Wolsey continued to flourish his crosses and pillars before him wherever he went, and the London wags and 'prentices continued to enjoy their jests. The cardinal, however, bore their gibes good-humouredly enough; for among his many better qualities must be numbered a kindliness of heart which won him the devoted love of his own followers, even when most unpopular with the multitude.

Fisher's biographer, "the universities themselves had drunk deep of Luther's cup." Not that we would be understood to sanction the idea that the English Church at this period was in a state of universal relaxation and decay; though it is an assertion very commonly made, and based partly upon those denunciations of the vices of the day which rang from the pulpits of men like Colet and Fisher, and partly upon undeniable facts, which, however, affect but a small portion of the ecclesiastical body. If there were some religious communities, like the Franciscans of Coventry, unworthy of the habit which, in the subsequent revolution, they were the first to fling aside, there were others, like the noble Carthusians, among whom More had drunk in the martyr's spirit, who were ready to a man to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ. The very fact that the existing corruptions were exposed with such unsparing severity by the best and worthiest of the Church's teachers, is enough to prove that she, as ever, maintained her faithful witness against sin and error in every shape. Doubtless, however, there were great abuses; and the greatest was this,—that the action of the Church was crippled by the tyranny of the State. During two centuries the crown had been gradually usurping more and more the supreme power in all causes civil and ecclesiastical; there existed no longer those fearless prelates who had dared to oppose the Norman and Plantagenet sovereigns; Bishops were now the nominees of the crown; and English kings and English parliaments had introduced a course of legislation which had all but set at naught the authority of the Apostolic See. This was the real canker of the English Church; her prelates had become worldly and time-serving in proportion as they had sacrificed their freedom and independence; and as loyalty to the chair of St. Peter was exchanged for servility to the crown, scandals increased, errors sprang up, and the whole body lost something of that life and spirituality which is only to be cherished by a close union with its Centre and its Head.

To all these evils Fisher was sensibly alive. He had marked the growing spirit of insubordination, and the silent spread of those heresies which were daily assuming a

more alarming form. Both in the university of Cambridge and in his own diocese he had done all that became a watchful pastor of the flock; but perceiving that his labours bore but little fruit, he had resolved on proceeding to Rome to lay the whole state of the English Church before the Sovereign Pontiff. He had already obtained the consent of the king and of his metropolitan, and had made every preparation for the journey, when he was obliged to defer his design in order to attend the synod of the whole clergy, which was called together by Wolsey soon after his nomination as legate. Fisher naturally hoped that in such an assembly the abuses prevalent in the Church, and the disaffection of the people, would not fail to come under consideration; but when he found how little business was likely to be transacted in this much-talked-of synod, he rose and addressed his fellow-prelates in the following terms:

“May it not seem displeasing to your eminence and the rest of these grave and reverend fathers of the Church, that I speak a few words, which I hope may not be out of season. I had thought that when so many learned men had come together, some good matters would have been for the good of the Church; that the scandals that lie so heavy on her members, and the disease that takes such hold on these advantages, might have been thereby at once removed. But who hath made any the least proposition against the ambition of those men whose pride is so offensive while their profession is humility, or against the licentious lives of those who are vowed to chastity? How are the goods of the Church wasted! the lands, the tithes, the other oblations of our people’s devout ancestors wasted, to the scandal of their posterity, in riotous expenses! How can we exhort our flocks to fly the pomps and vanities of the world, when we that are Bishops set our minds on nothing more than that which we forbid? If we should teach according to our doings, how absurdly would our doctrine sound! and yet, if we teach one thing and do another, who shall believe our report? We preach humility, sobriety, and contempt of the world; and the people perceive in the same men that thus speak pride and haugh-

tiness of mind, excess of apparel, and an abandonment to the pomp and vanity of the world; so that they know not whether to follow what they see, or what they hear. Excuse me, reverend fathers, I blame herein no man more than I do myself; for many times when I have settled myself to the care of my flock, to visit my flock, to govern my church, and to answer the enemies of Christ, there hath suddenly come a message to me from the court that I must attend such a triumph, or receive such an ambassador. What have we to do with prince's courts? If we are in love with majesty, is there a greater excellence than Him whom we serve? If we delight in stately buildings, where are there higher roofs than those of our cathedrals? If in goodly apparel, is there a greater ornament than that of the priesthood? or is all this better company than the communion of saints? Reverend fathers, what these temporal things may work in you I know not; but this I know, that to myself they are an impediment to devotion, and I think the time is come for us who are the heads to give example to the inferior clergy in these particulars, whereby we may be better conformable to the image of God; for in this trade of life we now lead, there can neither be any likelihood of perpetuity in the state wherein we stand or safety to the clergy."

Whilst such were the feelings of the Bishop of Rochester, More was every day becoming more painfully interested in the controversies of the day. Germany was being laid desolate by the insurrections of the Anabaptists. Frightful scenes of slaughter and violence every where followed the promulgation of Lutheranism. This was but the natural effect of doctrines which taught men that crime was no hindrance to salvation, and that, do what he would, no man could lose his soul unless he were to refuse to believe. As tidings of these things reached More through the correspondence he kept up with John Cochleus, one of Luther's most zealous opponents, he conceived a daily-increasing horror of the heresies which had given them birth. The deep religious sentiments which had ever guided him shaped themselves more and more into the form of loyalty to the Church, and every blow aimed at her by her enemies did

but foster the generous enthusiasm which prompted him to offer himself as the champion of her cause.

"Times," says St. Augustin, "are not idle, but as they roll away produce wonderful effects upon the soul." The ten years which had elapsed since More's publication of the *Utopia* had wrought in him many changes of feeling, and had developed the philosopher's dreams of speculative good into the earnest zeal of one who struggles hand to hand with present evil. In the fairy-land of Utopia, indeed, "each man was to be free to follow what religion he pleased, and to try and draw others to it by force of argument;" moreover, "no man was to be punished for his religion, or for disparaging the religion of others." But when those lines were penned Christendom was still Catholic, and the hideous enormities of the German sectaries were all undreamt of. Such tolerance would now have been little better than indifference; a sacred duty lay on all Catholics, and More prepared to discharge it. "Some," he wrote, "are so wearied with sorrow at these things, that they would fall into a slumber and let these wretches alone; but if we would match them, we must watch and pray, and take pen in hand. I, for my part, shall perform what I have promised, if God give me life and grace thereto."

And thus in different ways was God preparing the hearts of two of his servants ere that great crisis which was to give to each the martyr's crown. Both were nerv-  
ing themselves to act as the bold uncompromising opponents of heresy and corruption, and both perhaps looked forward with a vague prophetic fear to some coming occasion which might let in upon their own land the tide of evil, in which all that was holy and venerable should be overwhelmed. Such an occasion was now about to be furnished from an unlooked-for source; but before considering those events with which More was so closely concerned, and which eventually brought about his own ruin, together with that of the Church whose cause he identified with his own, it is right for us to remind ourselves, that if England had not forfeited the gift of faith by her own sins, and her own cowardice, not even the tyranny of a royal Tudor could have availed to deprive her of it.



## CHAPTER IV.

The divorce. More sounded on the subject. Part taken by Fisher. More accompanies the embassy to France. His controversies with the heretics. His embassy to the Netherlands. Letter on hearing of the fire at Chelsea. Fall of Wolsey. More appointed his successor as chancellor. He is again urged on the matter of the divorce. His installation and speech. Difficulties of his position.

IT is not our purpose to enter upon the narrative of that celebrated cause which resulted in the separation of England from the communion of the Holy See, except in so far as is absolutely necessary for explaining its influence on the fortunes of Sir Thomas More. But it is unfortunately impossible to give any portion of English history during the last twenty years of Henry's reign which is not more or less clouded by the monstrous shadow of the royal infamy; and this is peculiarly the case in tracing the career of More, and of his fellow-martyr Bishop Fisher,—the special victims of Henry's malice, and of his unhappy companion's revenge.

Nearly twenty years had elapsed since Henry had been united in marriage with Catharine of Aragon, daughter to the late King of Spain, and aunt to the reigning emperor Charles V. She had been previously contracted in marriage to his elder brother Arthur, whose death took place six months after their nuptials had been solemnised; but the impediment which thus existed to his own union with her on the ground of affinity had been removed by a Papal dispensation, and all further objections had been set at rest by the unanimous decision of his council.

All parties are agreed as to the character of this deeply-injured queen; and her best praise may be found in the fact, that during the twenty years that she preserved her influence over Henry's heart the evil half of his character was kept under restraint, and the many noble and princely qualities which he undoubtedly possessed were given their full exercise. She was both devout and learned; and Erasmus in his letters declares her example to have been a silent reproach to the corruption of manners too prevalent around

her. "Amid the delights of a court," he says, "her delight is in prayer;" and Henry himself was fain to say of her that "she had all the virtuous qualities that became her rank; high-born, yet withal of so meek a spirit as if her humility had not been acquainted with her birth." "Even when the queen had lost his heart," observes Lingard, "she never forfeited his esteem." It is probable that had the passionate desire which Henry entertained for male heirs to the crown been gratified, the idea of dissolving his union with Catharine might never have suggested itself. But the three sons whom she had borne him had all died in their infancy, and the Princess Mary was their only surviving child. It does not clearly appear with whom the suggestion first originated of reviving the old objections to the validity of the marriage, that so a new alliance might be formed which would strengthen the ambitious interests of the king, and which might at the same time secure him the blessing which he so ardently coveted. The king repeatedly declared that the whole question grew out of his own conscientious scruples; whilst in the opinion of the public Wolsey was generally given the credit of having first proposed to his master the possibility of divorce. If this were true, it is at any rate quite certain that Wolsey was entirely ignorant of the real cause of the king's "conscientious scruples," namely, the attachment he had formed to one of the queen's attendants, the beautiful Anne Boleyn. He was full of designs for marrying the king to a French princess, whereby to strengthen the alliance against the imperial power, and to favour his own aspiring views. That the question at issue did admit of dispute must also in fairness be granted, though it cannot be doubted that, had the ambition of Wolsey, or the passions of Henry, been more under restraint, the world would never have heard a word further on the matter.

Wolsey was indeed aware of the king's avowed admiration for Anne, but it never occurred to him that he could seriously contemplate raising her to his throne; and, whatever blame he may have incurred in the part he took in the divorce, he is clear from the infamy of having originally proposed it as a means of gratifying the king's new-born

passion. In fact, his rage and vexation when first he learnt from Henry's lips that he wanted no French princess, and that Anne Boleyn was to be queen so soon as the divorce could be obtained, hurried him into the unprecedented indiscretion of opposing for a brief moment the royal will. He threw himself at his master's feet, and conjured him to forbear from a step which must cover him with disgrace: a rash piece of sincerity, which did but gain him the enmity of the Boleyns, even though, on perceiving his mistake, he did his best to atone for it by helping on the measure which he was powerless to avert.

It would seem that, before taking any open steps towards obtaining a divorce, Henry felt his way gradually, and was willing to ascertain the probable state of public feeling on a matter so extraordinary by questioning those of his prelates and ministers in whom he placed most confidence. Gladly would he have secured the approbation of his scheme on the part of Sir Thomas More, whose known skill in questions of theology would have given a particular weight to any opinion he might have expressed. More has been charged by some with dissimulation, or at least with a culpable concealment of his real sentiments on the subject. That he studiously abstained from giving any thing like a decisive opinion; that, when teased and questioned by Henry for a reply, he invariably declared the matter to be one fit only for the decision of theologians; and that, whenever he could, he kept out of the way when it was under discussion,—is certainly true; nor do we see that in so doing he acted otherwise than any wise and good man might have done. It is quite possible that he may have felt the difficulties of the question sufficient to embarrass him in giving a decisive opinion one way or another; whilst, on the other hand, his shrewdness must have anticipated how the debate would finally end, in which case he knew his royal master well enough to be sure that an unfavourable judgment would seriously endanger the heads of them that gave it. His subsequent condemnation of Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn, before the dissolution of his union with Catharine had been sanctioned by the Pope, must not be taken as any proof that at this time he had any equal

strong convictions which he concealed from motives of selfish policy ; for as yet there had been no thought of acting without reference to the Holy See. But he was averse to the whole question ; and with a resolution which did him honour, and which certainly exposed him at times to as good a chance of losing the royal favour as if he had taken open part against it, he refused to be mixed up in an affair from which his whole heart revolted.

Not so his friend Fisher, who throughout his life kept to the principle of courageously speaking his mind in plain terms, in all presences and at all risks. When the king's "secret matter," as it was called, was first laid before a council of prelates summoned to meet privately at Wolsey's house in Westminster, the Bishop of Rochester at once answered and repelled all the arguments urged against the validity of the marriage with Catharine ; and bluntly declared, that inasmuch as there was no cause to entertain the question, it would be right to remove that "scruple" from the king's breast as soon as possible. But Fisher stood too high in popular estimation for the king to give up all hopes of gaining him to his cause. On a certain day he led him apart in the gallery of the royal palace, and after abundant flatteries of his learning and virtue, unfolded to him the torments of his conscience, and conjured him to declare how he might be set free from these terrible doubts and scruples. Fisher knelt at his feet, and, with a simplicity which proved how little he knew the tiger whose paw was resting on his shoulders, affectionately tried to comfort him by bidding him lay aside his distressing thoughts, for that the matter was too clear to admit of doubt ; adding, with characteristic energy, that did any peril happen to his soul by reason of his present marriage, he would take the guilt incurred upon his own conscience. "Nay more," he added, "there be worthy and learned men in your kingdom who, if they might speak with freedom, do hold it a perilous and unseemly thing that a divorce should be so much as spoken of." Henry had received his answer : his brow darkened, and he abruptly quitted the gallery, and never looked favourably on the Bishop from that day forward

Meanwhile all parties were agreed on one point, namely, that the marriage having been originally celebrated in virtue of a Papal dispensation, it could only be dissolved by the same authority; and the great point now was to gain the concurrence of the Pope, and to hurry the proverbial slowness of the Roman see.

During all the negotiations which preceded the appointment of Cardinal Campeggio as joint legate with Wolsey, for the consideration of the question, More preserved a strict neutrality. He had accompanied Wolsey in the celebrated embassy to France, wherein the French king was to be sounded on the "secret matter" of the divorce, and concerning which Wolsey has left so candid a manifestation of his diplomatic policy, when he writes to the king that he purposes to defer the disclosing of it till he is at the point of departure; "handling it after such a dark and cloudy sort that he shall not know your grace's utter determination and intent in that behalf till your highness shall see to what effect the same shall be brought." But in these "dark and cloudy" negotiations More took no share; and on his return to England, he gave his attention to a more luminous "handling" of some of the heresies of the day. The publication of his *Dialogue*, a work principally directed against the errors of Tindal, induced a "reply" from his opponent of a very personal character. More was soon involved in a longer controversy than he had originally anticipated. We have already alluded to the general character of his controversial writings; the ridicule which he directed with so merciless a hand against the inconsistencies of his adversaries incensed them greatly, and they tried to diminish the effect of his sarcasms by contemptuously pretending to treat his writings as "jesting toys." "And yet," observes Sir Thomas, "I scarce believe these good brethren can find any pleasant thing to divert them in my books; for I write nothing in them that may be pleasing to them." Among other books which he wrote at this time was *The Supplication of Souls*, intended as a reply to *The Supplication of Beggars*. The writer of this work was the notorious Fishe, and its object was to show that the clergy had possessed themselves of half the realm



of England. Having proved to his own satisfaction that the mendicant friars alone were in the annual receipt of 43,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, he goes on to show still further that the two-hundredth part of this is as much as they require or deserve. More's reply is in his most sarcastic style. He specially criticises the arithmetic of his adversary: "His calculation of the mendicant friars, and what they receive," he says, "is about the same as to begin by supposing that every ass has four heads. Well, they take this as granted, and then they will have at the rate of eight ears for each ass. And such is the ground he takes with the friars, till he gets the total amount of what they receive, not even losing the odd 6*s.* 8*d.*" The second part of the book contains a defence of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, which in its grim grotesque pathos forcibly reminds us of those ancient paintings of the same subject which may be seen on the walls of some old mediæval cloisters. With all his powers of satire, it must, however, be added, that his manner of treating the heretics is remarkable for its fairness and integrity.\* Cresacre remarks that, unlike most writers of the day, he never wrested their words to the worst, or made their arguments appear weaker than they really were, but always gave them the full benefit of as much sense as they contained. On more than one occasion he corrected or withdrew expressions of his own which had been misunderstood, or which he saw could be reasonably called in question. His exposure of the vicious circle in which the heretics argued, when they admitted the necessity of a "true teacher" to explain the Scriptures, and then defined the "true teacher" to be any man who truly preached the word of God according to the same Scriptures, is as good-humoured in its drollery as it is masterly in its argument. Friar Barnes himself, if he had any sense of fun in him, must have yielded to the irresistible humour with which he saw himself represented as nonplused by the unanswerable questions of the good-wives of his congregation; or to that inimitable piece of arithmetic by which the invisible Church of the new teachers is made to become visible, in

\* It is pleasant to add that Fishe became a sincere convert, and died penitent.

an imaginary court presided over by St. Gregory, who, wearied out with their interminable harangue, finally bids the court-crier count heads with his staff, and reduces the number of the malcontents to four. In the course of his arguments he brings in a humorous story of his own jester, Harry Patenson. "There are those," he says, "who tell us that we shall all be damned except we believe aright; and then go on to tell us that we can know what is right only by the Scripture, and that the Scripture cannot be learned without a true teacher; but that we cannot be sure of a true teacher, and so cannot be sure to understand it aright, and yet that God will damn us for understanding it wrong, or for not understanding it at all. This will never do. It puts me in mind of a tale they tell of Master Henry Patenson, a man of known wisdom in London and almost every where else. He was once waiting on his master in the emperor's court at Brussels, and was soon perceived to be a man of especial wit, and unlike the common sort. This set the others against him, and they took a sport in angering of him; and out of divers corners hurled at him such things as angered him, but hurt him not. Thereupon he gathered up good stones,—not gun-stones, but as hard as they,—and those he put apace in his bosom, and then stood him up on a bench, and read a proclamation aloud, in which he commanded all on their peril to depart, except only those who had hurled at him, that he might know them, and hurl at them again. For whosoever tarried after his proclamation made, he would take him for one of his hurlers, or else one of their counsellors, and so have at their heads, whoever they were that should abide. Now his proclamation was in English, and the company that heard him was such as understood no English, but stood still, and laughed at him. When he saw that, 'How now!' he cried, 'do ye stand still every one? I ween that not one of you will move a foot for my proclamation; thereby I see well that ye be hurlers, or of counsel with the hurlers, all the whole main of ye, and therefore have at ye all!' And at the word he hurled a great stone out at a venture, he neither wist nor cared at whom."

In the epitaph which More composed for himself, and

which may still be seen in Chelsea Church, he styles himself, "to thieves, murderers, and heretics grievous;" an expression which has been often most unjustly construed as an evidence of his having been an advocate of persecution. But, in point of fact, the greatest tortures to which he ever subjected his opponents were the pointed raileries of his own wit; and how "grievous" they felt the wounds inflicted by these weapons may be readily conceived, when we remember that the pride of human nature can always better bear to be injured than to be laughed at.

Campeggio arrived in England in the October of 1528; and in the May following the legatine court opened its sittings, which were closed in the July of 1529, judgment being deferred until the whole proceedings should have been submitted to the Sovereign Pontiff. We have More's own declaration that during the whole of this time he never interfered in a matter "which was," he says, "in hand by the ordinary process of the spiritual law, whereof I have little skill." He was only too glad to accept a new embassy to the Netherlands, which took him out of the way; and early in 1529 he set out for Cambray, in company with Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, to negotiate the terms of peace between England, France, and the imperial states. In this his last foreign mission he distinguished himself in such a way as to procure more advantageous terms to England than either the king or the council had anticipated. But, in spite of the dear and familiar company of Tunstall, he soon grew home-sick, and wrote to Erasmus, complaining how little the office of ambassador suited one who had his wife and children at home, with the broad sea between them. He was not so low-spirited, however, as to omit an occasion of diverting himself in his own way. Whilst staying at Bruges, some "pragmatical professor" of the university (as Blackstone calls him) gave out that he was ready to answer any question on any subject which any man might please to propose to him (*in omni scibili, et de quolibet ente*). More immediately sent in his query, given in the dog-Latin of English law, *Utrum averia carucae in vetito namio capta sint irreplegiabilia* ("Whether beasts of the plough taken in with-

*ernam* are incapable of being replevied by the sheriff");\* adding, that one in the retinue of the English ambassador would maintain the thesis against him. As usual, he won the laugh against his boastful adversary, who was glad to excuse himself from entering on so puzzling a disputation. When he returned to England, he proceeded at once to Woodstock, where the court was then residing; and there the news was brought him of a domestic calamity. The chief part of his house at Chelsea, and all his outhouses and barns filled with corn, had been consumed by a fire, caused by the carelessness of a neighbour's servant. He sat down at once, and wrote the following letter of consolation to his wife, the English style of which has been remarked as being purer and better than any of his more elaborate compositions. But had its diction been as rude and barbarous as that of his favourite Macedonians, it must still have found a place in every biography of More, for the sake of the goodness of heart which is manifested in every line:

"MISTRESS ALICE,—In my most hearty wise I recommend me to you. And whereas I am informed by my son Heron of the loss of our barns, and of our neighbours' also, with all the corn that was therein; albeit (saving God's good pleasure) it is a great pity of so much good corn lost, yet, since it has liked Him to send us such a chance, we must not only be content, but also glad of His visitation. He sent us all we have lost; and since He hath, by such a chance, taken it away again, His pleasure be fulfilled. Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good

\* It is needless to observe that the English or the Latin terms would be equally unintelligible to Flemish ears.

'Replevin' in law is the remedy granted on a distress, by which a person whose effects are distrained has them restored to him on his giving security to the sheriff that he will try the right with the distrainer in course of law.

Should the party distrained secrete or otherwise dispose of the effects on which a distress had issued, a second distress might be levied, and other effects seized. This second distress is called in law *withernam*.

The question therefore was, whether a person distrained of his beasts of the plough by this second distress had the same remedy of replevin as he had in the case of the first distress.

worth, and heartily thank Him as well for adversity as prosperity. And peradventure we have more cause to thank Him for our loss than for our winning; for His wisdom better seeth what is good for us than we do ourselves. Therefore, I pray you, be of good cheer, and take all the household with you to church, and there thank God both for what He hath given us, and for that He hath taken from us, and for that which He hath left us, which, if it please Him, He can increase when He will; and if it please Him to leave us yet less, as His pleasure be it. I pray you to make good research what my poor neighbours have lost, and bid them take no thought therefore; for if I should not myself have a spoon, there shall no poor neighbour of mine bear loss by any chance happened in my house. I pray you be, with my children and your household, merry in God; and devise somewhat with your friends what way we were best to take for provision to be made for corn for our household, and for seed this year coming, if we think it good that we keep the ground still in our hands. And whether we think it good that we shall do so or not, yet I think it were not best suddenly thus to give it all up, and to put away our folk from our farm, till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit, if we have more now than we shall need, and which can get them other masters, ye may then discharge us of them; but I would not that any man were sent away he wot not whither. At my coming hither, I perceived none other but that I should tarry still with the king's grace; but now I shall, I think, because of this chance, get leave this next week to come home and see you, and then we will further devise what order to take. And so fare you well, with all our children, as you can wish. At Woodstock, the 3d day of September, by the hand of THOMAS MORE."

Whilst More was thus occupied with repairing his ruined barns, his great colleague and secret rival Cardinal Wolsey was tottering to his fall. The affair of the divorce had been his ruin. The delays of Campeggio, his determination to refer the whole affair to the personal decision of the Pope, and the manifest unwillingness of the Pontiff himself to pronounce a favourable judgment, were all laid



to the charge of the unhappy minister, whose former opposition to the match with Anne had never been forgotten or forgiven. All her influence with the king was now used, therefore, to bring about the disgrace of one whom she viewed as an obstacle in her path to the throne; and the many enemies whom Wolsey had made for himself at court joined common cause against him. It mattered little that, but a few short months before, Anne had expressed her pretended gratitude and devotion to him in terms surpassing even her accustomed strain of fulsome servility. "All the days of my life," she writes, "I am most bound of all creatures, next to the king's grace, to love and serve your grace, of the which I beseech you never to doubt that ever I shall vary from this thought, so long as any breath is in my body." And again: "The great pains and trouble you have taken for me is never like to be recompensed on my part but only in loving you, next to the king's grace, above all creatures living." And again: "When *this matter* (*i. e.* the king's divorce from his wife, and her own anticipated elevation to the throne left vacant by her mistress) is brought to pass, you shall find me grateful; and then look what thing in the world I can imagine to do you pleasure in, and you shall find me the gladdest woman in the world to do it."

Her gratitude and her gladness were manifested after a fashion most worthy of the writer; and that was by extorting a solemn engagement from the king to dismiss Wolsey from his favour, and never more to admit him to his presence. There is abundant evidence that Henry consented with reluctance to the ruin of a minister whose fidelity to himself could at least never be called in question; but the power of Anne was then paramount over his heart, and to please her he was ready to sacrifice a better friend than Wolsey. We shall not detain our readers with the narrative of his disgrace. Of its kind it has no parallel in history; and the pity and sympathy which we feel for Wolsey in his misfortunes have best befriended his memory with posterity. We are only concerned with it, however, at present so far as it affected the position of Sir Thomas More, and that was most materially.

The enemies of the fallen minister were not content till they had stripped him of every office and dignity which he possessed. He was forced to surrender the great seal into the hands of the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, his two bitterest antagonists; who announced to him at the same time that all his possessions were forfeited, and that he himself had been declared out of the king's protection. He had nothing left but to make over his whole personal estate into the king's hands, and to retire to the residence assigned him at Esher, reduced not only to disgrace, but even to absolute destitution. Meanwhile it became necessary to appoint his successor in the custody of the great seal, and all eyes turned on More; concerning whom the opinion expressed by Queen Catharine was probably agreed to by the great body of the nation, namely, that "the king had but one sound councillor about his person, and that was Sir Thomas More." His elevation to power at such a moment certainly argues that he was not looked on by the Boleyns as a direct opponent of their cause. He himself states, in his letter to Cromwell, that on his return from Flanders the king again urged him to consider the subject of the divorce; adding that, should he come to a favourable judgment, he desired to make use of him as a councillor in that matter. "Nevertheless," he continues, "he graciously declared that I should look first unto God, and after God to him; which most gracious words were the first lesson also that ever his grace gave me at my first coming into his service." More so far yielded to his sovereign's importunity as to consent to study the arguments in favour of the divorce. Cresacre tells us that in his previous answer to the king he had bluntly told him that if he needed councillors, St. Jerome, St. Austin, and other of the early fathers, might be consulted without fear of their concealing the truth out of human respect; and that, so far as he understood their language, to marry a new wife while the first was alive was wholly repugnant to Scripture. Now, however, unable to escape from entering on the examination of the subject, he gave no little time and diligence to the study of all which had been written or argued on the king's side; conferring also with Tunstall, Fox, and other

divines assigned him as assistants. Dr. Stokesley, lately appointed Bishop of London, on account of the good service he had rendered to the royal interests, was also commanded to confer with and instruct him; "but," says Cresacre, "for all the conferences he could have with him, Sir Thomas could in no way persuade himself to change his former opinion." Yet the bishop so favourably reported of Sir Thomas More's carriage therein, that he said he found him "very toward, and desirous to find out good matter wherein he might truly serve his grace; but yet he could not." It is probable that this "towardly carriage" of More's gave the king hopes that he would not fail in time to suffer himself to be convinced; however, he exacted no pledge from him of any kind, and More declares that in the whole prosecution of the divorce "the king, in his *blessed disposition*, used those only whose conscience he perceived to be well and fully persuaded on that point. But me," he adds, "and others to whom his highness thought the thing to seem otherwise, he used in his other businesses, not being willing to put any man in ruffle or trouble of his conscience. After this did I never any thing more therein, but settled my mind in quiet to serve his grace in other things."

Cardinal Pole plainly declares that the chancellorship was bestowed on More as "a bait to bring him to the bent of the king's bow;" and no doubt the readiness he showed to hear and consider all that could be said in favour of the king's "great matter" gave hopes to the Boleyns, who now ruled the cabinet, that he needed but to taste the sweets of office to be brought wholly to their views. In this, as will be seen, they altogether misjudged their man; but satisfied at least that he would offer no troublesome opposition to their designs, his appointment was decided on, to the universal joy of the public, whilst Wolsey himself, on hearing the news, is known to have declared "that he was the fittest man in England to be his successor."

Cardinal Pole asserts that he was the first layman who ever filled the office. In this he was mistaken; but the chancellorship had certainly in *most* cases been conferred on dignified churchmen; and it appears that the simple

rank and unpretending manners of Sir Thomas raised some fears among his colleagues lest, after the exterior magnificence with which the seals had been borne by Wolsey, his own plain simplicity might lower the office in the eyes of the vulgar. It was therefore determined to instal him with more than usual solemnity, and a very splendid pageant was got up for the occasion. On the 26th October 1529, he was conducted in procession to Westminster Hall, being led between the Duke of Norfolk, the first peer of the realm, and the Duke of Suffolk, the king's brother-in-law; and on reaching the stone-chamber, was there honourably placed in the high judgment-seat of the chancellor. Norfolk then, by the king's command, spoke to the concourse of people, who had gathered together "with great applause and joy." He set forth at some length the extraordinary merits which had moved the king to exalt one who was neither a prelate nor a noble to so exalted a dignity, and called on them to receive their chancellor with acclamations, as one at whose hands they might expect all happiness and content. More's modesty was not a little abashed at having thus to stand and listen to his own praises, proclaimed in so pompous a style; nevertheless, presently recovering himself, he replied in a speech wherein, after excusing his own unfitness for the office, he alluded gracefully enough to the splendid talents and unforeseen disgrace of him who but lately filled it. "When I look upon this seat," he said, turning his face to the chancellor's chair, "and call to mind who he was who last sat in it,—a man of what singular wisdom, of what notable experience, what a prosperous and favourable fortune he had for a great space, and how at last he had so grievous a fall,—I have cause enough by my predecessor's example to think honour but slippery, and this dignity not so grateful to me as it may seem to others; for it is both a hard matter to follow a man of such admirable wit, prudence, authority, and splendour, to whom I may seem but as the lighting of a candle when the sun is down; and also the sudden and unexpected fall of so great a man as he was doth terribly remind me that this honour ought not to please me too much, nor the lustre of his glittering seat to dazzle

mine eyes. This, therefore," he concludes, "shall always be fresh in my mind, and this will I have still before my eyes,—that this seat will be honourable, famous, and full of glory to me, if I shall with care and diligence, fidelity and wisdom, endeavour to do my duty; and I shall persuade myself that the enjoying thereof may be but short and uncertain. The former my own labours ought to perform; the latter my predecessor's example may easily teach me." Prophetic words, in which he seemed to anticipate the fate awaiting those whose tenure of life and office was dependent on a tyrant's pleasure.

The news of More's elevation to the chancellorship was received with enthusiasm, not only in England, but throughout the Continent. Known and beloved by many, his name was revered by all; and learning and virtue were themselves considered to have been honoured in the person of Sir Thomas More. Erasmus rejoices with genuine expressions of delight over his friend's good fortune; and declares that he is daily being himself congratulated by every man of eminence he knows, because More is now the lord high chancellor of England. No doubt he himself was far from insensible to the emotion of a gratified ambition; and yet it is hard to define by what kind of ambition he had suffered himself to be swayed. The indifference with which he resigned his office two years later, and his evident consciousness that, as he himself expressed it, he stood "on a slippery stair, with the sword of Damocles suspended over his head," show that he by no means valued the sweets of office at a very high price. Yet every biographer of More must acknowledge that his acceptance of so dangerous an office is just matter of surprise. "With a delicate conscience and a strong sense of duty," says Lingard, "he was not a fit associate for less timorous colleagues. The difficulties which in the course of two years compelled him to retire from court must even now have stared him in the face; and it was still in his power to avoid, but uncertain if he could weather the storm." We cannot attempt to explain the real motives which actuated him; probably, however, much liberty of choice was scarcely left him; for a subject of our Tudor



sovereigns had more difficulties in declining to have honours thrust upon him than we can realise. Moreover, it is always well to bear in mind the fact, that in reading history we have one advantage which the real actors in the scenes described do not possess. We know all that came after; we can trace results to their causes; and it is all but impossible for us to study the events of one century without interpreting them by those of the succeeding age. Thus, with the knowledge in our mind that the royal supremacy was established in England within two short years of Wolsey's fall, we can scarcely realise, what was nevertheless the simple fact, that as yet the bare idea of such a revolution had not occurred to the minds of the chief actors in it. Still less could More be supposed to have foreseen what would be the acts of that ministry in which he now accepted so responsible an office; for let it be remembered that the worst features in Henry's character had hitherto been kept under restraint, and that as yet he had aimed no open blow against the rights and liberties of the Church. Still he must have shared in the anxious forebodings which filled the minds of all good men, and to which the Bishop of Bayonne alludes when he says that "no priest would be found to accept the vacant seals, and that in the coming session of parliament it was thought that they would have some *terrible alarms*."

Whatever judgment we may pass, however, on the prudence of More's conduct in accepting this weighty office at such a time, and under such a master, there can be but one opinion as to his manner of discharging its duties. His conduct during those two years of sorrowful trial manifestly proved that his principles remained uncorrupted and unchanged; and his resignation at the end of that time was a tolerably significant protest against the unscrupulous acts of his colleagues.

## CHAPTER V.

Bill of impeachment against Wolsey. More's speech. His conduct as chancellor. His integrity and despatch of business. Charges of persecution brought against him. His apology. Proposed measures of Church-reform. Speech of Fisher. The progress of the divorce. The Universities consulted. Cromwell's advice to Henry. More's opinions on the supremacy. His uneasiness at the state of affairs. The Bishops offer him a sum of money. The clergy under a *præmunire*. First claim of the royal supremacy. More resigns his office as chancellor.

MORE had scarcely been one week installed in his new office, when he was called to take part in the impeachment of his unfortunate predecessor. A parliament was summoned to meet early in the November of 1529, which was opened by a speech from the new chancellor, in which he set forth the charges brought against Wolsey; whilst at the same time his enemies introduced a bill of impeachment against the cardinal, which had to be signed by all the law-officers of the crown, and by More amongst the rest. This bill contained forty-four heads of accusation, the truth of some of which were admitted by Wolsey, whilst he declared that a great portion of them were utterly untrue. "Those that be true," he added, "are of such a sort, that by the doing thereof no malice can be attributed unto me either to the king or state." This was true; for many of the charges were directed against the morality of his private life. There is no sufficient evidence of their justice; and the blameless character which Wolsey had maintained during his whole university career, together with the absence of all authentic proofs, justify us in believing them unfounded. Still we should be rash in condemning all those who signed the bill as guilty of calumny. However desirous we may be to rescue the reputation of the cardinal from the obloquy heaped on it by party prejudice, it must be owned that few men had ever thrown themselves more open to attack. Was it very wonderful that the world should credit evil of an ecclesiastic whose pomp and luxury surpassed that of royalty itself, or that they should show but little tenderness in dealing with the character of one whose respect for

the laws of the Church had not prevented him from holding the offices and enjoying the revenues, at one and the same time, of three bishoprics?

More set his name to the bill in his character as chief law-officer of the crown, but there is no proof whatever that he had any share in drawing it up, though he evidently believed in the truth of all that it contained. Contrasting the language he used on this occasion with the terms in which he had so lately spoken in the cardinal's praise (and that too at the very moment when the subject of his eloquent eulogium was disgraced and out of favour), we are led to surmise that his own opinion of Wolsey had been more or less affected by the assertions of his enemies. Doubtless he entertained but small respect for his character as a man or an ecclesiastic; there were portions of his public conduct which More severely and justly blamed, whilst the sentiments he had imbibed under the teaching of Colet led him to regard the worldliness and display which the cardinal exhibited in his private life with peculiar disapprobation. But this, if it may partly explain, cannot be held to justify the readiness with which he yielded to the storm of unpopularity now raging against his fallen rival, or the coarse and ungenerous terms in which he expressed himself.\* The bill was passed by the Lords, but thrown out by the Commons, through the influence of Thomas Cromwell, who appears to have acted under the direction of the king. In fact, Henry wavered between indulgence and severity, as a lingering kindness towards his old favourite or the arts of Anne Boleyn alternately exercised their powers over his heart.

The parliament, having been chiefly summoned for the purpose of the impeachment, was closed after having sat little more than a month, and More was thus enabled to give his undivided attention to the business of chancery. His was one of those active minds to whom severe mental labour is a real enjoyment; he loved a hard day's

\* We must, however, remember that More's speech on the opening of this parliament is reported by Hall, the court historian, who may have made it the vehicle for conveying his own notorious prejudice against the fallen cardinal

work, and appears throughout his life to have had a positive relish for the transaction of legal business. The long arrears of neglected causes and appeals, therefore, which now lay before him were far from terrifying him, and he set himself to the task of giving final judgment with a heartiness which soon let some daylight into the mass of confusion. Every morning, from eight to eleven, he spent in hearing causes; then came dinner, at the then fashionable hour of noon; and after dinner, the chancellor sat in his open hall to receive the petitions of all who chose to come before him, and to decide the cases of the poor; "and the poorer and meaner the suppliant was," observes his grandson, "the more affably he would speak to him, and the more heartily would he hearken to him."

In all this he presented a somewhat striking contrast to his predecessor. The people who thronged the courts to gaze on their favourite in his new elevation saw now neither pillars nor pole-axes; there was no longer any display of the "fine crimson robes of taffety, satin, damask, or cassa, the best that could be got for money;" there was no scent of perfumed vinegar and "confections against pestilent airs;" and the idlers at the door of Westminster Hall no longer beheld the mule, "trapped altogether in crimson velvet, with golden stirrups," and the "great horses, trapped with fine scarlet," as in the days of the chancellor-legate. They saw his place filled by a man somewhat low of stature, whose pale complexion and clear gray eyes bespoke, indeed, a keen and quick intelligence, but in whose outward bearing there was little either of magnificence or pretence. His robes were thrown on carelessly, and often all awry; he spoke in a clear and distinct voice, but without any thing of the affectation of an orator; and, contenting himself with as few attendants as possible, he had the air of one who sat in chancery to transact its business with his own good head and rapid hand, and to leave nothing to another which he was able to do himself. Nor was this all. In Wolsey's days there had been grievous complaints of the venality of the courts of law, and especially of the chancery; gold alone could obtain a hearing, and bribery was so unblushingly practised,

that it had become a kind of regular system. All this was now changed; and Dancey, one of the new chancellor's sons-in-law, finding that, on the occasion of a suit in which he was interested, his relationship to the judge in no way helped him to a favourable decision, ventured to expostulate. But More was the very Brutus of chancery. "Dancey," he replied, "thou knowest that there is none on earth that I reverence more dearly than my father; and yet I tell thee that were he on one side, and the devil on the other, *the devil should have his rights.*" Heron, another of his sons-in-law, also received the disappointment of a "flat decree against him;" and it soon became known that neither money nor kindred had any further claims for a favourable judgment in Westminster Hall. A rich widow, named Croker, on obtaining a decree against Lord Arundel, presented More, on New Year's Day, with a pair of gloves, in which were forty pounds in angels; but he with all courtesy told her that, as it would be a breach of good manners to decline a lady's New Year's gift, he would accept the gloves, *but must refuse the lining*, and accordingly emptied the money into the donor's lap.

Those who shared his familiar intimacy bore witness that the simplicity of his private life was in perfect harmony with his unpretending exterior in public. His new dignity had introduced no change into his manner of life at Chelsea; and those who were entertained as guests at the table of the lord high chancellor of England thought it worthy of remark that he ate but of one dish, and that usually some salted meat, and that there was nothing he appeared to relish better than coarse brown bread and cheese, with milk and a little fruit. As to wine, he seldom touched it, and to his temperate manner of living may doubtless in great measure be ascribed the singular power and vigour of his mind, which might almost be deemed indefatigable. In the course of a few terms, his constant assiduity to his official duties had cleared off all the arrears which had accumulated during the time of his predecessor; and during the remainder of his chancellorship, every cause was decided as soon as it was ready for hearing. These Herculean labours he achieved almost unaided by the Mas-



ter of the Rolls. Roper tells us that he personally examined all matters that came before him, and "patiently worked them out to a final decree, which he himself drew out and signed."

One morning before the end of term, having gone through his list of causes, he was told by the officer-in-waiting that there was not another cause or a petition to be brought forward. With a pardonable vanity, he ordered the unexampled fact to be entered on record; and the circumstance gave birth to an epigram, whose prophecy, observes Lord Campbell, has been fully verified :

"When *More* some time had chancellor been,  
No *more* suits did remain ;  
The same shall never *more* be seen  
Till *More* be there again."

It would not have been *More*, if some drollery had not mixed itself up in his discharge of serious duties. On one occasion a very foolish bill was presented to him by one Tubb, an attorney, whose name was appended to the document, and who earnestly requested the chancellor's signature. Sir Thomas, after reading the paper, took his pen, and wrote a few words at the foot of the page. The attorney, imagining he had signed the bill, carried it joyfully to his client; but on examination, it proved that before his own signature, "A. Tubb," there stood the words, "A tale of."

We have already spoken of the scene which every morning was witnessed in the courts of Westminster when the chancellor, before opening the business of his own court, went into that of King's Bench, then adjoining, to ask the blessing of his venerable father, who sat there as senior judge. It was an action more in accordance with the fashions of those days than of our own, yet even then it struck men as a singular expression of that spirit of religious reverence for which *More* was ever remarkable. It was in keeping with the character of him who placed his pride, not in the pomp with which his office had hitherto been accompanied, but in acts of humiliation, as they were deemed by men of a different temper, who scoffed and took scandal when they heard that he still wore his surplice

among the singing-men of Chelsea Church, and acted as cross-bearer in the Corpus-Christi processions of his parish.

But even More's blameless career has found its capacious critics; and it is precisely its religious character which has furnished the subject-matter of their cavils. Fox, the notorious manufacturer of those libels which have been so greedily swallowed by later generations as true histories of Protestant "martyrdoms," and Burnet, yet more notorious as the misrepresenter of every portion of history on which he has been pleased to write, have united in blackening the memory of this great man by declaring him to have been a cruel and bloody persecutor of the Lutheran heretics. Fox tells us of a certain tree in the chancellor's garden which was called the "tree of truth," to which obstinate heretics, whom he confined as prisoners

his private residence, were tied and whipped. Burnet has repeated this story, representing the house at Chelsea as a sort of inquisition, More himself acting as grand-inquisitor; and declares that the "tree of truth" received that appellation on account of the many reformers who were there flagellated by way of forcing them to renounce their errors. A story loses nothing by its telling, and our readers have not now to learn how easy it is to give the key-note to an English historical cry. We must not, therefore, be surprised if we find that the flagellations at the "tree of truth" have attained a place among those facts which English students receive as undoubted; and that English historians continue to regret, in every variety of solemn phraseology, that More, when raised to power, should have forgotten his own principles of toleration, and "have become a persecutor even to blood, defiling those hands which bribes had never polluted." All the while More, in his *Apology*, written shortly after his resignation of the chancellorship, in reply to the aspersions cast on him by the heretics whom he had so triumphantly refuted, has furnished his own answer to the charge. "There are," he says, "divers who have said that such as were in my house while I was chancellor I used to examine with torments, causing them to be bound to a tree, and there piteously beaten. This tale some of these good brethren so caused

to be blown about, that a right-worshipful friend of mine heard it commonly spoken of." He then goes on to declare what those crimes were against religion whose authors he delivered for punishment to the officers of the Marshalsea prison. They were robbery, murder, and sacrilege—by stealing the pyx out of the church, and profaning the Most Holy Sacrament contained therein. These crimes he caused to be punished in a manner far milder than that which would have been adjudged to them had the severer penalties of the law been enforced. "But as regards *heretics*," he continues, "save only their safe keeping, I never caused any such thing to be done to any of them in all my life save two; the one of which was a child and servant of mine in my own house." This child had formerly attended upon a certain priest, who, becoming infected with the prevailing opinions, had taught him to blaspheme the Holy Sacrament of the altar; "which heresy," continues More, "he, being then in service with me, began to teach to another child in my house, who revealed the thing." And the punishment with which More wisely visited the fault was a sound whipping.

The other case, he tells us, was of one who, as is so often the case, had fallen "from frantic heresy into open frenzy." He had been first confined in Bedlam; where, by beating and correction, the common mode in those days of treating madness, he recovered his senses for a time. Being released, however, his old fancies began to return. He would wander into the churches, and there disturb the divine service by his follies; and specially would he break in during the most solemn part of the Mass, to the great scandal and terror of the congregation. More, with his usual penetration, guessed that the wits of this fanatic were not so hopelessly lost but that they might by proper means be brought again under control. He reckoned him among those who need not be mad a day longer than they choose, and caused him at his next outbreak to be taken up by the constables, bound to a post in the open street, and there beaten with rods before the whole town. Then, as he quaintly remarks, "it appeared that his remembrance was good enough, save that it went about grazing till it

was beaten home." In short, the Bedlamite from that day became a reasonable man.

Further than this, More declares: "Of all that ever came into my hands for heresy, not one of them, so help me God, had any stripe or stroke given them, no, not so much as a fillip on the forehead. All I had to do was the sure keeping of them,—and yet not so sure either but that George Constantine found means to steal away from me; and some say that when he got away, I fell into a wonderful rage. Now surely, though I would not have suffered him to go, if it would have pleased him to tarry in the stocks, yet, when he was neither so feeble for lack of meat but that he was strong enough to break the stocks, . . . so neither was I so heavy at the loss of him but that I had youth enough left me to get the better of it; nor spake I any evil word for the matter other than to my porter, to whom I said, 'John, see the stocks mended, and locked fast, lest the prisoner should return, and steal into them again.' And as for Constantine, how could I do otherwise than give him credit for what he did? Never will I be so unreasonable as to be angry with any man who, when he finds himself sitting ill at his ease, shall change his position for a better."

Such is More's humorous defence of himself; and in support of its veracity we have the words of Erasmus, that "while he was chancellor no man was put to death for the pestilent dogmas" of heresy, "while so many suffered for them at the same period in France, Germany, and the Netherlands." This statement, however, is not entirely correct; for it is certain that during the latter portion of More's chancellorship several convicted heretics did suffer death. But it is also certain that, for twenty-two months out of the thirty during which More held the seals, he constantly and successfully exerted himself to save the lives of those brought before him; and that during the whole of that time not a single execution for heresy took place. Many he induced to abjure their errors; nay he even strained the laws so far as to allow the Bishops to keep these unfortunate men for months, and even for years, in their own custody, both before and after conviction, that

by this means the execution of their sentence might be delayed, and more time might be given in which to effect their conversion.

During the last eight months of his chancellorship, indeed, several of these men fell back into their former errors, and suffered as relapsed heretics. Whatever might have been More's private feelings, it is clear that he could only administer the laws as he found them. As a judge he could do, and had done, much to temper the severity of their execution, but he could not repeal them altogether. Now, in the case of *relapsed* heretics, no discretionary power was allowed; the law was clear and explicit that for such there was no reprieve. More than one, therefore, suffered at Smithfield; but so far was this from being the result of the chancellor's severity, that it was evidently one among many causes of mental anguish which arose out of his position, and which finally induced him to resign his painful office. It was not until More had resigned the seals, and had been succeeded by the infamous Audley, the plunderer of the monasteries and the forward advocate of the royal supremacy, that heresy became high treason, and that, under the bloody Act of the Six Articles, the axe and the fagot kept up the reign of terror.

The new chancellor soon began to feel the difficulties of his position. In the very first parliament called after his elevation, the question of Church reform had been introduced, though with caution; for the obsequiousness of parliament to the royal wishes had yet to be proved. The proposed measures, which professed to aim at the reformation of abuses among the clergy, were warmly supported in the Commons by Audley, who had succeeded More as Speaker, as well as in his office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; but, when brought before the Lords, they found a bold and vigorous opponent in the Bishop of Rochester. With a noble indignation, he exposed the hypocritical pretence of the devisers of these bills, who, under colour of reforming the vices of Churchmen, were in reality aiming at the property of the Church. "I hear," he said, "that a motion has been made for surrendering the small monasteries into the king's hands; but I suspect it is not



so much the *good* as the *goods* of the Church which men are looking after. Truly, my lords, how this may sound in *your* ears, I cannot tell: to me it sounds as if our holy mother the Church were to become a bondmaid, and by little and little to be quite banished out of those dwelling-places which the piety of our forefathers hath conferred on her. But beware, my lords, of yourselves and your country, of your religion and your mother the holy Catholic Church. Remember Germany and Bohemia, and what miseries have there befallen; for I tell you plainly, except you resist now, you will see all obedience withdrawn, first from the clergy, and then from yourselves; and if you search for the *cause* of these mischiefs, you will find that they all arise from *want of faith*."

This speech greatly displeased the Lords who were of the royal party; and the Duke of Norfolk exclaimed, in ill-suppressed resentment, "My lord of Rochester, many of these words might, I trow, have been spared; but I know it is often seen that the greatest clerks are not always the wisest men." "My lord," replied the undaunted Bishop, "I do not remember any fools in my time that have ever proved great clerks." But the rage of the Commons at the part taken by Fisher was not to be controlled; and deputation of their members, headed by Audley, waited on the king, to complain of the language of the Bishop. He was summoned to the royal presence, and rebuked for his boldness; but he replied, with equal respect and courage, that so long as he had seat or voice in parliament, he would speak his mind freely in defence of the Church.

These debates must have made it evident to More how dangerous and embarrassing a position he held in the royal counsels. Every day a rupture with Rome appeared more imminent, and it was not long before he was again pressed to reconsider his opinions on the odious subject of the divorce. He fell on his knees, and humbly reminded Henry of his own words to him when, delivering the great seal into his keeping, he had bid him, "Look first to God, and after God to him," and added, how much it pained him to be unable to serve his grace in that matter; and Henry so far respected his scruples as to agree, that when the subject was

introduced in the Council Chamber, he should be allowed to retire.

At the suggestion of Cranmer, the plan had been set on foot of consulting all the universities of Europe on the disputed question of the divorce; and the precious scheme had been at once set on foot, under the management of its first proposer. It was carried out in a manner worthy of its author. What bribery could not purchase was sought to be extorted by threats. A certain Dr. Crook was employed as agent in Italy, where he engaged some to write in the king's cause; and, with unlimited command of money, was enabled to send over to England (to use the words of Fox) "an hundred several books, papers, and subscriptions"—how obtained, or in what degree genuine, mattered but little to Henry. In every city, from Venice to Rome, was to be seen the disgraceful spectacle of a royal "agent" distributing money in reward for a signature. Fox seriously assures us that these agents had orders to give no money till the opinions of the divines had been freely given. This admirable rule was certainly not strictly attended to in all cases, since we find the English ambassador charged to promise the emperor, in Henry's name, "the sum of 300,000 crowns, the amount of Queen Catharine's marriage-portion, if he would consent to the divorce." But his indignant reply must have made the ambassador blush for his master's shame: "He was not a merchant," he said, "to sell the honour of his aunt." Still the inquiry went on. About half the Italian cities had been won to the side of Henry. In Germany, however, he was less successful: not one public body would espouse his cause; and after a bribe of two millions of crowns to the King of France, the pretended assent of the University of Paris was only won by trickery of the grossest description, whilst some other of the French universities were either not consulted, or their answers suppressed.

It had been intended to lay the collected opinions in favour of the divorce before the Pope, as the united voice of the Christian world. But even Henry and his unscrupulous advisers shrank from this; the manner in which they had been put together was too notorious, and it was

resolved instead to despatch a letter to Clement, complaining of his partiality and delays, and representing the dangers which threatened the kingdom in the event of a disputed succession. More appears to have given his passive concurrence both to the original plan for consulting the universities, and to the address to the Pope, which was subscribed by the lords spiritual and temporal in the name of the whole nation. But Clement's mild though firm reply, and his prohibition forbidding any ecclesiastical court from giving judgment on the case, reduced the king to despair; and he appears for a brief space to have been disposed to give up the struggle. Then it was, at what was possibly the turning moment of his life, when grace and faith yet pleaded in his heart, that he came across his evil genius in the person of Thomas Cromwell, the hardened, unscrupulous minister of evil, who first dared to suggest to the king, as a means of overcoming the difficulties that surrounded him, to cut the Gordian knot at once by taking all authority into his own hands, and declaring himself the supreme head of the Church within his own domains. Even Henry was taken by surprise at an idea so new to him; but at once it seized possession of his soul, and that hour determined the fate of the English Church. However, it was plain to Cromwell's sagacity that so preposterous a change could not be brought about at once; the religious feelings of the nation were not to be so suddenly braved and outraged; and the plan was devised of attacking the prerogative of the Roman Pontiff piecemeal, and of making it apparent to the world that the king had both the will and the power to throw off all dependence on the Holy See, if that See should finally refuse compliance with his wishes.

It is not a little remarkable that More, as we know by his own words, had not always those clear and precise views which he now held concerning the divine origin of the Pope's supremacy. It was the reading of King Henry's own book against Luther, or probably the studies in which his share in that work necessarily engaged him, which first carried conviction to his mind. At first he doubted whether Henry in his zeal had not overstated the case; and he ventured to remind him of the many limitations which the laws

of England had put upon the Papal prerogative, and of the inconveniences which might arise, in case of future disputes with Rome, from doctrines so strongly asserted. But the arguments of Henry in reply, and above all, the writings of the fathers, to which he referred him, carried such conviction to his mind, that, as he says, nothing adduced on the other side of the question "could ever afterwards lead him to think that his conscience was not in right good peril, should he deny the supremacy provided by God."

Catholics in the present day may well be shocked and startled at the fact which is thus disclosed,—namely, that two centuries of state legislation against Rome had wrought such a work in England, once so zealous in her loyalty to the Holy See, as actually to raise doubts in the minds of some as to the divine origin of the Papal power. More himself tells us, that he had often heard the Pope's authority spoken of as a thing useful, but not *necessary*, to the Church. He was not one to rest satisfied with vague and undetermined notions on such a question; and for seven years he made it a subject of diligent studies, the course of which, as we have said, were chiefly directed by the king. He was therefore, in some sense, a convert of Henry's own making to the doctrine that the supremacy of the Pope was *a thing of God's appointment*; and had the change in his views been merely the result of that mean sycophancy of which so many examples were offered in an age when men were not ashamed to receive a new creed every month from the lips of their royal master, we should doubtless have seen him re-assuming his former scruples, and acknowledging without difficulty the dogma of the royal supremacy. But More was of a temper far different from that which swayed so many of the public men around him: his former doubts had merely affected the source whence the Pope's authority had been derived, whether immediately from God, or from the general consent of Christians; the *fact* he had never questioned, believing "that the realm of England could as soon refuse obedience to the See of Rome as a child could refuse obedience to its own natural father."\*

\* From his speech on his trial, as reported in Roper's Life.

perately expressed; and he would even have been content at this juncture to agree to some measures by which the power of the Holy See in England would have been restrained, in the hope that by such concessions the country might have been preserved from a final and disastrous severance from the centre of Catholic unity.

His uneasiness and anxiety at the aspect of public affairs, and at his own most embarrassing position, now daily increased. Roper, his son-in-law, relates how, walking with him one day along the river's side at Chelsea, the disturbance of his mind at length found vent in words. "Would to God, son Roper," he said, "that, on condition three things were well established in Christendom, I were put into a sack, and presently cast into the Thames." "What great things be those, sir," replied he, "that should move you so to wish?" "In faith, son, they be these," said he: "the first is, that whereas the most part of Christian princes be now at mortal war, they were at universal peace; the second is, that where the Church of Christ is at present sore afflicted by many errors and heresies, it were settled in perfect uniformity of religion; and the third is, that the matter of the king's marriage were, to God's glory and the quietness of all parties, brought to a good conclusion."

His official engagements did not so wholly engross his time but that he still found leisure to commence several fresh works in defence of religion, and in reply to the pernicious writings of the sectaries. The constancy with which he applied himself to the task of their exposure gained for him no small share of enmity from those tinctured with the new opinions; and on one occasion certain merchants of the City had thought fit to rail at him in such unmeasured terms, that the Water-Bailiff of the City, formerly in his service, and in whose presence the malicious sayings had been uttered, could not contain his wrath. As he that day accompanied Sir Thomas home in his barge, he poured out his indignation at all he had heard, and concluded by suggesting that such slanders against one so high in office should not go unnoticed or unpunished. But it was an impossible thing to stir the choler of More, whose temper



never yielded before the vexations of the times. He only smiled, and answered with his usual sweetness, "Why, Master Water-Bailiff, would you have me punish those by whom I reap more benefit than by all you that are my friends? Let them rail on, in God's name, and shoot what bolts they will. So long as they hit me not, what am I the worse? I have more reason to pity them than to be angry."

It was about this time that he lost his father, as we have elsewhere related. Contrary to the expectations of the world, the death of Sir John More brought his son no accession of fortune; and, in spite of his elevated rank, it could not be concealed that the lord chancellor was in reality a poor man. In fact, although his professional income had at one time been a large one, he had saved nothing out of it. Cresacre tells us that his hospitality to rich and poor, and his liberality to the Church, made large demands upon his purse; and his son-in-law declares, that previous to his acceptance of the great seal he had not made any purchases of land above the value of twenty marks a year; and that when his debts were paid, he had little more left him than a hundred pounds and his gold chain of office. These circumstances were so well known to the public as to determine the Bishops and clergy of England on offering him a sum of 5000*l.*, raised among themselves, as a testimony of their deep sense of the services he had rendered to religion by his writings in its defence; for, as they asserted in their address, agreed on in convocation and presented by the Bishops of Bath, Durham, and Exeter, "there had not been a single Churchman who had matched his writings either in their extent, their soundness of argument, or their happy success." But they knew not how to measure his loftiness of soul. He thanked them heartily for what he must have felt to be a splendid testimony to his own services to the faith; but he steadily declined receiving any thing at their hands. Then they pressed him at least to suffer them to bestow it on his wife and children. "Nay, my lords," he replied, "you shall not so steal a march upon me; I had rather see it thrown into the Thames than that I or mine should touch a single penny. For though your offer be so friendly and honour-

able, yet I set so much by my pleasure, and so little by my profit, that I would not for a much larger sum have lost the value of so many nights' sleep as were spent on the same; and yet, on condition all heresies were suppressed, I am willing that all my works be presently burned."

The Bishops were fain to take their denial and depart; but the rumour was soon spread abroad of what had happened, and the heretics loudly declared that More had been bribed by the clergy to write against them. His indignant denial of this calumny is expressed in his *Apology* in lofty terms. "I take God to witness," he says, "that all of them could never fee me a single penny; but, as I plainly told them, I would rather have cast their money into the Thames than have taken it. For though there be good and honourable men among them, *yet I look for my thanks from God, who is their better, for whose sake I took this labour, and not for theirs.*"

Meanwhile the state of public affairs became daily more threatening. On the 7th of February 1531, the clergy or England were called on to recognise a new title, to which their ears had till then been strangers. The king, for the first time, summoned them to acknowledge him as "protector and only supreme head of the Church and clergy or England." The circumstances under which this demand was made were of peculiar atrocity, forming part of a plan devised and carried out by Cromwell.

By the statutes of *præmunire* passed in the reign of Edward III. it was forbidden to receive any bulls from Rome, or to act on their provisions,\* without the consent of the king; and all persons so doing became liable to imprisonment, outlawry, and the forfeiture of all his goods. It was left, however, in the royal power to modify or suspend the operation of these acts; and Wolsey, after his nomination as legate, had been careful to procure a patent from the king enabling him to exercise the legatine authority, and confirming all his acts in that office, as well past as to come. Bailey, in his *Life of Bishop Fisher*, assures us that Henry *repossessed himself* of this patent through the instrumentality of a private servant who was about the

\* Appointments to bishoprics or other ecclesiastical benefices.

person of the cardinal; but Lingard is silent on this point, and merely says that Wolsey, when charged with having exercised the office of legate contrary to the statutes of *præmunire*, refused to plead, what was perfectly well known, that he had done so by the express permission of the king, and considered it more prudent to leave his cause to the royal mercy. His silence, however, gave Henry a fatal advantage over the rest of the clergy. Regardless of all principles of honour and justice,—regardless of the fact that he had himself joined in soliciting the legatine dignity for his favourite minister, and had openly and repeatedly concurred in his exercise of it, he now not only enforced its provisions against the unfortunate cardinal, but, declaring the entire body of English clergy liable to the same penalties for having admitted the jurisdiction of the legate, and so become aiders and abettors of his misdemeanour, he directed the attorney-general to file an information against them in the Court of King's Bench. The convocation hastily assembled to consider what was to be done under these extraordinary circumstances, and offered to compound for a full pardon for the sum of 100,000*l*. Let the reader judge of their bewildered astonishment when they received for answer, that the only condition under which such a composition would be accepted was the insertion into the preamble of the grant of a clause acknowledging the king to be “the only supreme head of the Church.” This proposition was propounded to the clergy by the lips of the infamous Audley,\* a fit spokesman on such a business, and that with such a mixture of fair promises and threatenings,

\* It is not without cause that we have applied this epithet to Audley's name; if ever any man had a legitimate right to the title, it was this degraded minister of a degraded king. Of his conduct on the trials of More and Fisher, we shall have occasion to speak later; but it may be well to say a few words on his after career. He had been one of the great promoters of the king's marriage with Anne Boleyn; and three years after the celebration of that marriage, he took a leading part in her prosecution, and sat as her judge. The marriage, to effect which Cranmer and Audley had not scrupled to sacrifice the faith of a nation, these same men now dissolved, and declared null and void from the very first, in a divorce-suit which lasted only a few hours. “It is well,” observes Lord Campbell, “that Henry did not direct that Audley should officiate as execu-

that many of the convocation thought themselves incapable either to refuse the king's demands, or even to consult further on the matter; but Fisher of Rochester and the primate Warham, by their energetic language, so far wrought on the convocation as to induce them to refuse their consent to this unqualified recognition of a power till then unheard of, and succeeded in causing the insertion of the important words, *quantum per legem Dei licet* ("so far as the law of God will permit").

Too much has perhaps been said of the cowardice of the prelates and clergy in yielding thus much to the king's demands: for it is evident that these words substantially invalidated the whole recognition of supremacy; and that Henry felt himself defeated for that time at least, is evident

tioner and Cranmer as his assistant; for they would probably have obeyed sooner than have given up the seals or the primacy."

It was Audley who had declared that the settlement of the succession on the issue of Queen Anne was a thing "on which the good and happiness of the kingdom depended," and it was he who afterwards introduced the bill into parliament for declaring her daughter illegitimate; it was he who, in the same statute, proposed to confer on the king the power to *dispose of the crown by his will or letters patent*; it was he who was the most zealous and efficient agent in the suppression of the monasteries, his zeal being influenced by the hope of sharing in the plunder; it was he who presided at the judicial murder of Courtney marquis of Exeter, and De la Pole, Lord Montague, and whose monstrous charge to the jury obtained their condemnation; it was he, lastly, who—having worked thus hard in the service of the tyrant, owning no law but his will, and eagerly advocating every measure of fraud and iniquity which disgraced the reign of Henry VIII.—applied to Cromwell, at the close of his career, for an extraordinary recompense for his zeal. He had set his heart on a grant of the dissolved abbey of Walden in Essex. Having urged his many services, he says, "I have in this world sustained *great damage and infamy in serving the king's highness, which this grant shall recompense.*" In recompense for his "infamy," the grant was made; and the Priory of the Canons of the Holy Trinity in London was added, as a site for a town residence. Audley, if such a man may be said to have had any religion at all, was a favourer of Lutheranism; yet it was he who introduced the "bloody bill of the Six Articles." Audley joined in the blasphemous flattery which saluted Cromwell as worthy to be "vicar-general of the universe;" and a few days later he presided over the attainder and destruction of his colleague. What need we say more? Our readers will surely think these specimens of his career sufficient to prove his right to the cognomen of his own selection.

from his exclamation on hearing a report of what had passed. "Mother of God!" he said to his agents in the affair, "ye have played me a pretty prank. I thought to have made fools of them; and now ye have so ordered the business, that they are likely to make a fool of me with their *quantums*." Nevertheless he did not feel that he then possessed the power to push matters further; so the objectionable *quantum* was admitted, and the pardon granted. It is evident that this qualified recognition did, in fact, mean nothing, and in no material way diminished the lawful authority of the Pope; for, in the following December, when the vacant sees of York and Winchester were filled up by the king's appointment of Lee and Gardiner, the new prelates applied to Rome, as usual, for the papal bulls admitting them to the spiritual jurisdiction. Nevertheless, shadowy as was the supremacy as yet assumed by the king, he had gained an immense advantage by accustoming the ears of the nation to the ill-omened sound. A parliament, well packed by the skilful management of Cromwell, assembled in the February of 1532; and with its obsequious aid Henry found himself in a position to press his claims more boldly. Acts were passed prohibiting appeals to Rome, and abolishing the payment of first-fruits to the Holy See; and these were followed by the extortion of a promise from convocation never more to enact or enforce any constitutions without the royal authority and assent.

Willingly would Henry and his wily adviser have compromised the chancellor to some participation in their measures; and having resolved to present to parliament the answers of the universities on the subject of the divorce, they prevailed on him on this occasion to go down to the lower house, accompanied by twelve of the peers, and to address the Commons on the business in question. In his official capacity, More was unable to refuse; but his speech betrayed by its confusion the embarrassment he felt. Every day furnished some fresh incident which increased his sympathy with the persecuted princess, and his just fears for the integrity of the Church. His aversion to the royal measures, if it was not avowed with any indecent clamour,



was yet so far from being disguised, that the nobles of the king's party frequently reproached him with ingratitude to his royal master. Lord Manners, a courtier who had ingratiated himself in the king's favour by his unscrupulous support of all the new measures, as well as by his unblushing advocacy of the divorce, meeting the chancellor one day, taunted him with his backwardness in the royal service, adding sarcastically, "But even so is the old proverb, *Honores mutant Mores*." "Yes," replied More, who in the worst extremity was never wanting with an answer, "it is an apt proverb, if rightly translated; for *Mores* is Latin for *Manners*."

But the strong repugnance he had felt to the task lately imposed on him, and the certainty he felt that others still more odious would have to be gone through, did he remain in office, determined him at length on the only course which was left for him to follow, and this was the resignation of the great seal. He saw plainly enough that the time was come when no faithful Catholic could act as councillor or minister of the king. He therefore urgently sought permission to retire from office, pleading as an excuse his failing health; for he had indeed for some time suffered from a complaint in his chest, brought on, it is said, by continual stooping over his writing-table. After some refusals, his petition was at length granted; and on the 16th of May 1532, he surrendered the great seal into the custody of the king, who four days later gave it into the custody of Sir Thomas Audley. More had held the chancellorship for little more than two years and a half; during which brief space of time he succeeded in winning for himself a reputation as illustrious as any which attaches to the names of his most celebrated predecessors or successors in the office. His extraordinary application to business was rivalled by his matchless integrity; and Henry himself was fain to do an empty justice to his noble character in saying, as he received the seals from his hand, that "he thanked him for his good services, and that in any future suit which he might hereafter have, which might affect either his honour or his profit, he should not fail to find him a good and gracious lord." Of the truth

of these professions, observes Cresacre, let others judge, when the king not only never bestowed on him the value of a single penny, but robbed him and his posterity of all he ever possessed. Some, says the same writer, have affirmed, that had Sir Thomas been so happy as to have died before his resignation and disgrace, "he would have been deemed a fortunate man, living and dying in all men's favour, and in the highest judgments of the world. But to my mind they are but carnally wise that affirm this, and have no way tasted of heavenly wisdom. For the last scene of this tragedy is the best, and one not to be wished to have been omitted for all the land which King Henry enjoyed, though you should add the abbey-lands beside. For though in his lifetime Sir Thomas had showed lively examples of many excellent virtues, yet his most heroic qualities he hath more exactly expressed towards his end. No champion is crowned till he hath gotten the victory; and behold, he most gloriously triumpheth over the flesh by forsaking his life and leaving it; the world, by despising it; and the devil, by manfully resisting all his temptations."

This "last best scene in the tragedy" is all that now remains for us to tell; and our readers will probably join in the opinion of More's biographer and descendant, and agree with him that, great as he had ever shown himself in life, in disgrace and death he proved himself greater still.

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## CHAPTER VI.

**More in retirement: his poverty. He breaks the news of his resignation to his wife. Provides for his servants. Is forced to separate from his children. Returns to his studies. Draws up his own epitaph. Progress of public affairs: the king's marriage with Anne Boleyn. Cranmer. Conclusion of the divorce. The Pope's final decision. Statutes against the papal supremacy. Fisher's courageous remonstrance. Oaths of supremacy. More loses the royal favour. Charges of corruption brought against him. The holy Maid of Kent. Examination of More: his defence. Anecdotes. He foresees his coming trials.**

**DURING** the greater period of his chancellorship, More had already felt the pressure of no common anxieties and embar-

rassments. He had found himself forced to subject his free and open disposition to the restraints of prudence and compromise, and had been worn down by the daily consciousness that every public act in which he took a part was likely to entangle him in one way or another in disloyalty either to the Church or the king. But the burden once laid down, he was himself again; his old smile played once more on his lips, and his old gay and joyous spirit looked forward to the return of that happy domestic life which fifteen years ago he had so unwillingly exchanged for that of a courtier and a statesman. It was true, he was a poorer man than when he began life; but poverty was one of the last things that More could treat as a serious evil: spite of all his wife's lectures, he could never persuade himself to do aught but make a jest of it; and so his ruined fortunes, and small hopes of mending them, gave him but little uneasiness. If his purse was light, his heart was yet lighter, as, on the morning after his interview with the king,—the affair of his resignation being yet a secret from his family,—he accompanied his wife to Mass at Chelsea Church; for it chanced to be a holiday. Must it be confessed?—there was just one place where the shoe pinched, one difficulty which still perplexed him; and that was how to break the intelligence of his loss of greatness to Dame Alice. However, as the truth must be told at last, he hit on a characteristic way of telling it. During his chancellorship it had been the custom for one of his servants to go after the conclusion of Mass to the dame's seat in church, and to tell her if "my lord" had already gone home before her. On the morning in question, however, Sir Thomas came in person; and cap in hand, with a low bow, said to her, as though mimicking the tone of her attendant, "Madam, my lord is gone." Alice took but little heed of the words, imagining he was but jesting with her, according to his wont; but on reaching home he took the occasion to explain to her that in very truth "my lord" had gone, and that the dignity she had enjoyed as the wife of the Chancellor of England was no longer hers. This was a grievous blow to the good dame, a sad instance of her husband's incurable habit of "making goslings in the ashes;"

and it is to be feared that on this occasion she forgot some of the wholesome lessons which she had received during their twenty years of married life. But More, when he could not silence her, had an admirable way of turning the discourse; and as she continued to rail at him for his folly, he began to criticise her dress, wherein, as he said, he had that morning observed a great defect. This created a diversion: she called her daughters, and bade them tell her what was amiss in her costume; and she "chiding them that none of them could espy it, they still saying they could find none, Sir Thomas merrily said, 'Do you not perceive that your mother's nose standeth somewhat awry?' at which words she stepped away from him in a rage. All which he did to make her thinke the lesse of her decay of honour, which else would have troubled her sore."\*

The matter being once broken to his family in this humorous manner, he began to set his house in order in a more serious spirit. His first thought was for his servants and retainers, many of whom, according to the custom of the day, were gentlemen of good birth. Calling them together, he explained to them that in his reduced circumstances he could no longer maintain so large a household; and added, that if their desire were to enter the service of any other nobleman, he would endeavour to settle them to their contentment. One and all answered him, with tears in their eyes, that they would rather serve him for nothing than other men for pay. But to this he would not agree, but procured fitting situations for all of them, according to the requirements of each one. His barge, with its eight watermen, wherein he had daily made the passage from Chelsea to London, he presented to his successor Audley. Patenson his jester, a necessary member of a *great man's* household, but an inconsistent appendage to the very humble establishment which More now proposed to maintain, was sent home to his family, or, as others say, placed among the retainers of the lord mayor and his successors in office. And when all these arrangements had been made, with that charity and kindness of feeling which More ever displayed to his domestics, he called his children



about him, and consulted with them as to the course which lay before them. The hard part of the whole matter had now to be looked in the face; he could no longer bear the charges of so large a family, and it had become necessary that some at least of his married sons and daughters, who had hitherto all remained with their children under his roof, should now separate to their own homes. "When he saw us silent," says Roper, "and not ready to show our opinions unto him, 'Then will I,' said he, 'show you my poor mind. I have been brought up at Oxford, at an inn of chancery, at Lincoln's Inn, and also in the King's court, and so have gone from the least degree to the highest; and yet have I in yearly revenues at this present left me a little above a hundred pounds a year; so that now must we hereafter, if we like to live together, be content to be contributors together. But my counsel is, that we fall not first to the lowest fare; we will not, therefore, descend to Oxford fare, nor to the fare of New Inn. We will begin with Lincoln's-Inn diet; and if we cannot maintain that, we will the next year go one step down to New-Inn fare, wherewith many an honest man is content; and if that too exceed our ability, then the next year will we descend to Oxford fare; and if our power stretch not to that, why then will we with bags and wallets go all begging together, and hoping that, for pity's sake, some good folk will give us an alms as we sing the "*Salve Regina*"\* at their doors; and so shall we still keep company, and be merry together.'"

Lord Herbert, and after him some other writers, have severely criticised this little speech of More's to his children as undignified, and calculated to render his family contemptible. We know not what our readers may think; but to us there is no passage in his whole life more touching or beautiful. How keenly and painfully his own most affectionate heart must have felt the necessity of separation, we need not stay to prove. His home had been all in all to him; and to keep his children about him, and the close tie that united them together unbroken, he had taxed his

\* He is here referring to the custom of begging adopted by the poor scholars of Oxford, who were wont to go begging through the streets, singing the "*Salve Regina*."



hospitality beyond the strict limits of prudence ; and now, when the time was come for them to part, and they stood silent and in tears around him, with nothing to say against the hard necessity, we hear him cheering them with his old strain of light-hearted humour, and assuming a gaiety which he was very far from feeling. He was seeking to win them to his own spirit of content, and to teach them to meet adversity with as calm a brow and as ready a smile as they had worn in better days. If this be levity, it is surely a levity not unworthy of a philosopher and a Christian.

"I cannot persuade myself," says Herbert, "for all this talk, that *so excellent a person* would omit at fit time to give his family a more *sober* account of his relinquishing this place." If his lordship had taken the trouble to read two pages further on in the *Life* written by the son-in-law of More, he would have found evidence that More could speak soberly enough when it was needed ; and his letters to his friend Erasmus might satisfy any one that the tone of levity which he took with his children was assumed only to disguise a deeper feeling. It was the jest which often comes from a full heart, when it does not choose to show its anguish.

It was finally arranged that all his children should return to their own homes, except his beloved Margaret and her husband, from whom he could not bear entirely to part ; and they accordingly took up their residence in the house adjoining his own.

He pours out his whole heart in his letters to Erasmus, rejoicing, like a schoolboy let loose from the desk, over his recovered freedom. "The thing, my dear Desiderius, which I have most wished for from my childhood,—that, being freed from the troublesome business of public affairs, I might live for a while only to God and myself,—I have now, by the special goodness of God and the favour of the king, obtained." Having obtained this long-coveted leisure, he set himself to draw out plans for its profitable employment ; promising himself that, even in retirement, he might yet do good service to his country and his faith. "The golden mediocrity," he says in one of his letters, "is the

thing to be desired, which shall obey us, and not we it. I set greater store by my little house, my study, the pleasure of my books, my family, and the rest and peace of my mind, than by all your king's palaces and the favour of a court. I look for other fruit of my study; that I may bring forth the children that I travail on, that I may give out some books of mine own, to the common profit, which may somewhat favour, if not knowledge, at least wit and diligence." He accordingly applied himself to the completion of several controversial works begun during his chancellorship, but left unfinished. His *Apology*, the second part of his *Reply to Tindale*, and a work, in five books, in defence of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, belong to this period. The letter in which he so mildly and forcibly exposes the errors of Frith on the same subject is dated the year following his resignation, and may be cited as a fair example of his moderation in treating with heretics. Frith, indeed, perished in the flames; but they were none of More's kindling. The whole letter is conceived in a tone of gentle remonstrance rather than of acrimony; and if the humour of the writer sometimes breaks out, it is never expressed in an offensive manner.

We must not suppose, however, that More, in thus proposing to himself a life of literary toil, set an undue value on his own power as a writer. Few men ever displayed more indifference as to the fate of their works than he did, or regarded their merits with less complacency. Of his *Utopia*, undoubtedly the first of his writings in point of literary excellence, he was accustomed to say, that it was worth no better than to have stayed in its own island, or have been consecrated to Vulcan, *i. e.* to have been committed to the flames. His Epigrams were published almost against his will. "They never pleased my mind," he writes, "and you well know, my Erasmus, that if other men had not liked them better than myself, they should never have been printed." Of his controversial works he had already declared to the Bishops, that, provided heresy were put down, he should be well content to cast them all into the Thames. If he now, therefore, designed to go on writing, it was from a simple sense of duty. "The leisure

which my prince hath granted me," he wrote to Cochleus, "I purpose to dedicate to study and the honour of God;" and in one of his later treatises he apologises for taking up such subjects, being but a layman. "Would to heaven," he adds, "that all my labours were done, so that the memory of these pestilent errors were erased out of the hearts of Englishmen, that their abominable books were burnt up, and mine own walked off with them; that so the very name of these matters were utterly put in oblivion. . . . But as poisons will be found, so must treacle and other medicines be provided; but the very treacle were well lost, so that the poison were lost too." He concludes by recommending the study, not of his own controversial works, but of the spiritual writings of sound Catholic authors, such as the *Following of Christ*, or the *Scale of Perfection*, by F. Walter Hilton.

It was about this time also that More, who seemed aware that not only had his public career ended, but that the circumstances of the day rendered it not unlikely that disgrace might soon follow on retirement, drew up his own epitaph, which has since been engraved and set up in the chancel of Chelsea Church. His reasons for doing this he sets forth in a letter to Erasmus; they were chiefly that he might confute the reports, maliciously circulated by his enemies, that he had been *unwillingly forced* to resign his office. "I choose this method," he says, "to prevent these misrepresentations from gaining credit,—assuredly not on my own account, for I little heed what men say, so God but approve; but since I had written some books in our mother tongue in favour of certain disputed tracts, I conceived that it behoved me to defend the integrity of my character." The epitaph consists of a summary of the chief events of his life; and concludes with begging the prayers of the reader that "he may not dread the approach of death, but may meet it cheerfully for the love of Christ, and find death not so much death as the gate of a happier existence." One passage in this epitaph has been often cited as furnishing proof of the old charge against him, namely, that of being an inveterate persecutor of heretics. It is that in which he says his services were not ungrateful

to the people, albeit he had been severe to thieves, murderers, and [            ]. The blank space was left to be filled up with the word *heretics*, or rather to suggest that word to the mind of the reader; for it is most probable that the obnoxious epithet was not, as is commonly represented, engraved and afterwards *effaced*, but never really inserted, the surface of the marble being perfectly smooth, and presenting no symptoms of erasure. But this blank space on his monument is surely but a sorry proof of his character as a persecutor. That he was the sworn opponent of heresy needs no demonstration; and More was not the man to look on such a fact as calling for apology: but we fancy the heretics themselves would, if brought into court, have confessed that his pen was his most deadly weapon; and it was one from which they at least shrank as instinctively and almost as sensitively as from thumbscrew or fagot.

We must now glance for a moment at the troublous world from which More had withdrawn. Roper tells us that, shortly after his resignation, Cromwell visited him at Chelsea, on which occasion the ex-chancellor exhorted the new minister to show himself a faithful servant, and a right worthy counsellor to the king, and not to flatter him into an abuse of his royal power. "Ever tell him what he *ought* to do, and not what he *can* do," were his words; "for if a lion knew his strength, hard were it for any man to rule him." Alas, he little guessed to whom he spoke, —to him who was already devising in his heart schemes which, by the creation of new and unprecedented powers placed in the sovereign's hands, should confer something of their autocratic sway on himself as that sovereign's vicar.

The affairs of the supremacy and the divorce were now rapidly pushed forward. It will have been observed, that all that had hitherto been done in asserting the new claims of Henry as head of the Church had been in the way of threatening the Pontiff, with the hope of inducing him to pronounce a favourable decision on the protracted cause through fear of driving the king to extremity. But Clement, forbearing and even timid as he had hitherto shown himself, was not the man to be overawed or bullied into a sacrifice of duty. He had already assured Henry that he

would receive every indulgence compatible with justice; but he begged in return that the king would not require of him to violate the immutable commands of God. When, in defiance of all justice and decency, Queen Catharine had been formally expelled from court, and had addressed a letter to the Sovereign Pontiff setting forth her injuries and appealing to him for protection, Clement wrote in terms of calm and affectionate expostulation to the king, calling on him to restore her to her rights, and to banish her rival from his presence.

But by that time Henry had gone too far for any such remonstrance to recall him from his infatuation. The moment of hesitation had passed, and Anne had regained all her former power. In the September of 1532 she had been created Marchioness of Pembroke; on the 25th of January following she was *privately married to the king*; and the elevation of Cranmer to the primacy, left vacant by the death of Warham, gave Henry a ready tool for carrying out all his designs. We shall say nothing of the infamy with which this father of the English Reformation covered himself when, receiving his consecration as a Catholic prelate, and his investiture with the spiritual jurisdiction by bulls from the Pope, to whom he took the accustomed oath of fidelity, he began his archiepiscopal career by a solemn act of perjury. The expedient of *mental reservation*, when taking inconvenient oaths, has often been charged upon Catholics by their opponents, who should be reminded that this consummate act of hypocrisy was devised by Archbishop Cranmer, when, on the morning of his consecration, he “withdrew into a *private corner*, and there made a protest against what *he was going publicly to swear* in regard of his obedience to the see of Rome.”\*

\* Dodd, part i. art. 2, p. 213. The various apologies offered by Protestant historians for this detestable duplicity on the part of their favourite “martyr” are worthy of notice. Echard says, “If this seemed too artificial for a *man of his sincerity* (!), yet still he acted fairly, and without actual deceit.” Burnet tells us that “if he did not *wholly* save his integrity, yet it was plain he intended no cheat, but to act fairly and above-board.” Collier is a little staggered by this observation of the right reverend prelate’s, and says, “How a man can act *fairly*, and yet *not save his integrity*, is farther



Seated in the primate's chair, the solemn farce was now begun. He indited a fatherly epistle of reproof to Henry for scandalising the world so long by his unlawful marriage with Queen Catharine, and declared that he was determined, cost him what it would, to abide the scandal no longer. He therefore called on the king to empower *him* to pronounce a final sentence in the matter. Our readers will admire the ingenuity of this expedient: the judge asks and receives his powers of jurisdiction from the party in whose cause he is to adjudicate; in other words, King Henry is to pronounce his own divorce. An instrument investing Cranmer with such power was accordingly drawn up; and on the 20th of May the archbishop's court opened at Dunstable. Queen Catharine was summoned to appear; but treating the summons with dignified contempt, she was pronounced "contumacious," and three days later the solemn sentence was given that her marriage with the king had been *invalid* from the beginning; and five days later still, he who in these very instruments had the effrontery to set forth his title as the "Legate of the Holy See Apostolic" *confirmed* the private marriage already celebrated with Anne, although that marriage had taken place *four months before* the marriage with Queen Catharine had been declared null and void.\* He then called on the king to

than I can discover; and therefore, with due regard to Cranmer's memory, it must be said that there was *something of human infirmity* in this management." Well may Dodd remark that "several of these *human infirmities* were afterwards observable in Cranmer's conduct, if those errors can be so called which are the result of thought and mature deliberation."

\* When Luther was interrogated as to his opinion on the question of the divorce, he is known to have given a judgment unfavourable to the king; and it was commonly believed that his influence in Germany went some way towards procuring the universal rejection of the royal claims in that country. The apostle of the Reformation wrote with his own hand to Barnes, the king's agent, declaring he would rather allow the king to have *two wives* at the same time than countenance his divorce from Catharine. This permission he had already given to the Landgrave of Hesse; and it is somewhat curious that this was, in point of fact, the course adopted by Henry. His marriage with Catharine was *not dissolved*, nor its invalidity pronounced, when he solemnised his nuptials with Anne. Cranmer's active concurrence in this iniquitous proceeding

submit with resignation to this decision, and again *confirmed* the previous marriage with Anne in another court held at Lambeth on the 28th of May; two days after which the affair was terminated by the coronation of the new queen, amid a display of magnificent tournaments and festivities which solemnised the disgrace of England.

When the news reached Rome, Pope Clement proceeded to treat the transaction with the severity it deserved. After threatening the parties concerned with excommunication, if they did not separate and appear at Rome for judgment, he, after calm and weighty deliberation, annulled Cranmer's pretended decree, and pronounced the first marriage with Catharine to be *valid and lawful*; calling on the king to take her back again as his legitimate wife.

This final decision of the question of the divorce was not given until ten months after the sentence pronounced by Cranmer; a delay which sufficiently justifies Clement from the charge of acting in anger and precipitation. During that time, however, affairs had assumed a shape which soon made it plain that it had come to be a matter of little consequence to the king or his council in what way the Pope might give his decision. Long before the judgment pronounced by Clement could have reached the knowledge of Henry, the kingdom had been severed from the communion of Rome by legislative authority. Cromwell, who in reward for his past services now held, by patent, the office of chancellor of the exchequer *for life*, was charged with the framing of a succession of bills equally iniquitous and unconstitutional. The qualified submission lately extorted from the clergy under the dread of *præmunire* was now moulded into a statute, in which its former limitations were artfully omitted. Another statute placed the whole power of nomination to vacant sees in the king's hand, *abolishing the confirmation of the Pope*; so that

is in harmony with every part of his conduct both before and after his elevation to the primacy. We should not look for much respect to the sanctity of the marriage tie, or the inviolability of oaths, from the man who had twice entered into wedlock when bound to the profession of celibacy; the first time as a fellow of Jesus College, and the second by his engagement in holy orders.

henceforth the Bishops of England were to derive their jurisdiction from the sovereign alone. By these and other enactments, which passed the Legislature almost without opposition, in one short session the whole Papal power was swept away in England, and Henry obtained in very deed and truth the spiritual supremacy over its enslaved and degraded Church.

And were there none found who had the manliness to resist? Was not one voice heard to plead the cause of that Church which lay trampled beneath the feet of her crowned defender? Dodd, in his *Church History*, tells us, that at the final debate on the supremacy, in the latter end of 1534, the clergy were so much reduced in spirit by their late ill-treatment as to make but little opposition; and only seven bishops and two mitred abbots appeared in the House. "The rest . . . endeavoured to stand neuter, though afterwards they suffered themselves to be carried away with the stream." But *one* voice *was* heard, that voice which had never yet been silent when the honour of God and the integrity of the faith had been called in question. Fisher had protested in convocation against the submission of the clergy to the terms imposed on them, but in vain; it was now his glorious fate to stand *alone* in refusing his consent to the act which confirmed and completed the declaration of the royal supremacy. The plan had been adopted of framing an oath by which men were required to recognise the succession as settled on the descendants of Henry by his marriage with Anne; which was followed shortly afterwards by another oath, whereby the supremacy of the Church of England was given to the king, his heirs and successors, with all spiritual jurisdiction, without the insertion of any clause or condition, *quantum per legem Dei licet*. The oath of succession was first tendered to the lords spiritual and temporal, and taken by them *all*,\* with the single exception of the Bishop of Rochester, who absolutely refused to take it. It must be remembered, that not only had Fisher been throughout the firm and courageous friend of the injured queen, and that therefore the legalisation of her repudiation by Henry was

\* *Life of Fisher*, chap. xviii.

utterly repugnant to him, but that the oath now tendered did in express terms declare as unlawful a marriage solemnly pronounced valid by the Holy See. It did in substance renounce, and bid defiance to, the authority of the Vicar of Christ; and Fisher was ready to brave all the consequences of his refusal, sooner than give his sanction to such an act.

The watchful penetrating eye of Sir Thomas More had already guessed from what quarter the danger would come. He could not doubt that matters would soon be pressed to extremity, when from his retirement at Chelsea he heard of the marriage with Anne, and the preparations for her solemn coronation. He was himself invited to the ceremony, and three Bishops were found to act as the royal messengers, and to offer him 20*l.* to buy a dress suitable for the occasion; but he declined the invitation, and by so doing incurred the deadly hatred of Anne. He viewed the state of public affairs with sorrowful indignation. "God grant, son Roper," he said, "that these matters within a while be not confirmed *with oaths*." It was a prophetic prediction; for it was by the administration of *oaths*, even more than by the passing of statutes, that the royal supremacy was forced on the English Church, and her separation from the faith and unity of Christendom sealed with the blood of martyrs.

Nor did he deceive himself as to the probable issue of the question as regarded himself. Many were the nights he spent in prayer and watching, to fortify himself for the trial which he foresaw was not far off. He thought not of himself alone; he endeavoured to prepare the minds of his wife and children for some great adverse blow by drawing them, as though accidentally, to subjects of grave and heavenly meditation, introducing into his daily discourse familiar allusions to the sufferings and triumphs of the holy martyrs; and he would repeat again and again what a holy and blessed thing he deemed it to lose all things, even life itself, for the love of God, and how, did they but encourage him to die in a good cause, he would run merrily to such a death.

Meanwhile the king's temper towards him showed

symptoms of change. Henry had hitherto exercised a certain forbearance towards him, desiring earnestly to win him wholly to his cause ; but when he perceived no promise of such a result, he began to lend a more willing ear to the malicious representations of Anne, who had marked the late chancellor as an early victim of her hate. The first signs of More's impending disgrace were the complaints which began to be brought against him of misconduct in his late office. With a pardonable satisfaction, he had congratulated himself, in writing to Erasmus, on the fact that no one had yet stepped forward to challenge his official integrity. Now, however, charges began to thicken : it was said that he had received bribes and presents ; but the accusations were on examination so triumphantly disproved, that they did but set the matchless integrity of Sir Thomas in a brighter light. Certainly had there been the least possible evidence of misconduct in any of the cases brought forward, it would not have failed to be seized hold of by his enemies. One of these accusations was examined before the council, Lord Wiltshire, the father of Anne Boleyn and the sworn foe of More, presiding as judge. The charge consisted of his having accepted a silver-gilt cup from the wife of a person in whose favour he had pronounced a decree. He calmly admitted the fact of such a cup having been brought him, some considerable time after judgment had been given in the suit. The president's eyes glistened with delight ; and, unable to restrain his joy at what he deemed the conviction of his enemy, he exclaimed, "There, my lords, did I not tell you the matter would be found true?" But More quietly begged the council, as they had patiently heard one half of his tale, to tarry for the other, and went on to say that he had indeed taken the cup, but immediately sent for his butler to fill it with wine ; which being done, he had courteously drank to the lady's good health, and had then returned the cup into her hands to carry back as a New-Year's present to her husband ; and she herself, when called to give evidence, witnessed to the exact truth of this version of the matter. Other stories of a like description were similarly disposed of ; and the fact that nothing



was found which it was possible in the subsequent proceedings to allege against his honour, is a sufficient proof how scrupulously he had abstained from even the appearance of evil. Another accusation was, that he had answered and refuted a certain book set forth by the authority of the council, after the sentence of divorce had been pronounced by Cranmer; and this he also denied and disproved in a letter to Cromwell, which is preserved among his other writings.

But a yet more serious charge remained, and one to which More stood committed with something more of the shadow of justice. A certain nun of the priory of the Holy Sepulchre at Canterbury, named Elizabeth Barton, whose intellects were unsettled, and whose imagination had been powerfully excited by the recent attacks on religion and the injuries offered to Queen Catharine, had uttered a number of supposed prophecies and revelations, denouncing the divine judgment on the sacrilegious monarch. It had been her custom to apply to various persons of influence and reputation, and charge them to carry her remonstrances to Henry's ears. Among others she selected the Bishop of Rochester, whose principles were known to be in strong opposition to the measures of the court, and who so far gave her credit, that he counselled her to speak to the king in her own person. After this, she obtained an interview with Sir Thomas More, who appears at first to have been favourably impressed with her; and in this he was not singular, for multitudes of persons of all ranks were in the habit of resorting to "the holy Maid of Kent," as she was commonly called, and listening to her pretended revelations. By one of the late acts it had been declared high treason to slander the king's marriage with Anne, and this unfortunate girl and some of her favourers were the first to suffer under its provisions. At the same time Fisher and More were attainted for misprision of treason; the former escaped that time with the payment of a fine of three hundred pounds; as regards the latter, it would seem as if the insertion of his name in the bill of attainder was intended chiefly as a threat, in order to terrify him into unconditional submission to the king's

pleasure. But More showed as little disposition to be terrified as to be cajoled : he boldly demanded to be suffered to plead against the bill at the bar of the House ; a proposal which so alarmed the royal advisers, who well knew the extent of his influence, and dreaded the result should he be suffered publicly to speak in his own defence, that a private committee was appointed to hear him, consisting of Cranmer, Audley, Cromwell, and the Duke of Norfolk.

On the appointed day, he was summoned to their presence ; and Roper, who trembled lest his father-in-law should hopelessly commit himself by the undaunted avowal of his principles, besought him not to throw away his life on such a question, but, so far as he rightly might, to endeavour to procure the discharge of his name from the bill. More promised to be reasonable, and proceeded to confront the lords. Law proceedings and state trials were conducted in those days on principles very much at variance with our ideas of justice, and it was a common thing for a prisoner even on trial for his life to have to sustain an argument with his judge on the merits of the case, or the particular opinions for which he was about to die. Much in the same spirit was More's examination now conducted. The lords, whose object was to win him to submission, received him courteously, and then set to work on the task of his conversion. They reminded him of the many proofs of royal favour he had already received, and of the desire which the king entertained of retaining him in his service, and rewarding him with yet higher dignities ; adding, that there was nothing too great for him to expect, provided he did but add his sanction and consent to the sentence in favour of the marriage which had been already given by the parliament and the Universities. More replied that he admitted all they alleged concerning the gracious favour ever shown him by the king ; but as regarded the divorce, he had been repeatedly promised by his highness that on that subject he should never more be molested. Seeing that persuasion was of no avail, they had recourse to threats, saying that the king's majesty had bidden them, if they could not win him, to charge him that never was there servant so villanous to his sovereign, or subject so

traitorous to his prince ; forasmuch as that “he, by subtle and sinister sleights, had most unnaturally procured and provoked the king to set forth his book on the seven Sacraments, and the maintenance of the Pope’s authority, thereby causing his majesty to put a sword in the Pope’s hand, wherewith to fight against himself to his own dishonour.” There was something so novel in this extraordinary accusation, that it is really a matter worthy of admiration that More in his reply could have restrained his powers of ridicule, and answered to it with any show of gravity. That Henry, embarrassed by the results of his own literary success, should now turn on his old friend, and charge it on him as an unnatural and unheard-of villainy, that he had helped his royal master to verify his quotations, when he aspired to the fame of an author, and had traitorously and maliciously provoked him to the writing of a book, was certainly strange matter to be set forth in a bill of attainder ; and More in his reply again alluded to the fact, that so far from the king having acted under his influence, he had himself been convinced by Henry’s own arguments in favour of the Divine authority of the Holy See.

“My lords,” he said, as they continued to threaten him, “these threats are terrors for children, and not for me. I believe the king of his honour will never lay that book to my charge ; for there is none that can say more for my discharge on that point than himself. He knows that I was never promoter or counsellor of it ; only after it was finished by his grace’s appointment, I sorted out and placed in order the principal matters thereof. Wherein when I had found the Pope’s authority highly advanced, and with strong arguments mightily defended, I said to his grace that I thought it best that that place should be amended, and his authority more slenderly touched on. ‘Nay,’ quoth his grace, ‘but we are so much bound to the See of Rome that we *cannot do too much* to honour it.’ Then did I further put him in mind of our statutes of *præmunire*, whereby a good part of the Pope’s pastoral care was pared away ; whereto he answered, ‘Whatsoever impediment there be, we will set forth that authority to the uttermost ; for we have received from that See our crown

imperial,' *which, till his grace with his own mouth so told me, I never heard before*; which things being considered, I trust his highness will never more speak of this, but will himself clear me from the charge."\*

There was nothing to reply to this defence, and the lords therefore dismissed him from their presence, not a syllable having been spoken during their whole interview touching the real charge for which he had been brought before them, namely, his having countenanced and abetted the holy Maid of Kent.

He left the council-chamber in high spirits, although he well knew what the result of his bold defence was sure to be. As he and his son-in-law proceeded by boat to Chelsea, the latter, observing his unusual flow of joyous merriment, was persuaded that his name had been struck out of the bill, and that all was now well. So when they had landed from their boat, and were walking together, as was their custom, in the garden by the river's side, Roper ventured to question him on what had passed. "I trust, sir," he said, "that since you are so merry, all is well." "It is indeed well, son Roper," replied More; "and I thank God for the same." "Are you, then, sir, put out of the bill?" continued Roper. "By my troth, I never remembered the bill," returned More; "but I will tell thee why I am so merry,—I have given the devil a foul fall, and I rejoice because I have gone so far with those lords, that without great shame I can never go back again." It was one of the peculiar excellencies of More that he never feared to acknowledge his natural weakness. He was used to say of himself that his flesh was so frail, that without God's grace it could not so much as endure

\* We must bear in mind that More is here speaking of opinions expressed by him fourteen years previously. It was at this time that, by Henry's desire, he began those studies which ended by inspiring him with very different sentiments. Looking at the question merely as a law-officer of the English crown, he was, unhappily, but too correct in stating that the authority of the Holy See had been "pared away" by the statutes of *præmunire*. But, as we shall see, the sentiments he held at the close of his life were on this point clear and unmistakable: he regarded allegiance to the Vicar of Christ as binding on his soul under peril of eternal damnation.

a fillip; and he never blushed to own how much nature shrank from the sacrifices imposed on it by duty.

When Henry heard of the manner in which Sir Thomas had borne himself before the council, he passionately insisted that his name should be kept in the bill of attainder, and that he should be immediately proceeded against; but the lords succeeded in dissuading him from this, declaring that the conviction on the minds of parliament in favour of the late chancellor was so great, that there was no chance for the bill if it were made to include him; and Henry unwillingly yielded to their representations, though he did not relax in his determination to be avenged.

Roper was the first to hear that his father-in-law's name had been put out of the bill, and instantly sent off the joyful tidings to Chelsea. His wife hurried to More, full of thankfulness for her father's safety; but he received her congratulations with the warning words, "*Meg, quod differtur, non aufertur*,"\* knowing well that the hour of danger was only for a time delayed. A day or two afterwards he was visited by the Duke of Norfolk, who said in the course of their familiar conversation, "By the Mass, Mr. More, but it is perilous striving with princes. As a friend, I would I could bend you to the king's pleasure; mind you not that the anger of a king bringeth death?" "Is that all, my lord?" answered More with his usual readiness in reply; "then the difference between you and me is only this, that I shall die to-day, and you to-morrow;" so clearly did he see his position at that moment, and so heartily did he yield his consent to the fate which to-day or to-morrow, as he was well assured, awaited those who were not content to take the tyrant's will for the rule of their conscience.

As soon as he heard of the framing of the oath, he held himself in readiness for a summons; and to prepare his family for such an event, he hired a pursuivant to come suddenly to his house when he was at dinner, and, knocking hastily at the door, warn him to appear before the commissioners. He wished that they, as well as he, should be under no mistake as to the probable result; and one day

\* "That which is deferred is not dismissed."



asking his daughter Margaret how the world went, and what news there was of the new queen, "In faith, father," she replied, "never was it merrier; there is nothing at court but sporting and dancing." "Alas, Meg," he exclaimed, "is it even so with her? it pitieth me to think unto what misery that poor soul will come; with *these dances of hers she will spurn off our heads like foot-balls*, but it will not be long ere her own head will dance the same dance as ours." These words received a sad and literal fulfilment, and after the execution of Anne, were not unnaturally looked on as among those sayings of Sir Thomas More which evinced something of the spirit of prophecy.

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## CHAPTER VII.

The oath of succession. More is summoned to take it. His parting from his home. His interview with the commissioners. Fisher and More committed to the Tower. His correspondence with his daughter Margaret. Their interview. Margaret seeks to move him. His constancy. His meeting with his wife. Attempts of Cromwell and Rich to entrap him. His papers seized. Sufferings of Fisher. His trial and death. Trial of More. Treachery of Rich. More's defence. His sentence. Farewell to his children. His execution. Conclusion.

WE have already spoken of the oath of succession, by which the members of both Houses of Parliament had been called upon to declare the lawfulness of Henry's marriage with Anne, and to settle the crown on her issue. The administration of this oath began a few days after the execution of the holy maid of Kent. It had been taken by a great number of the clergy; but the commissioners were most anxious to secure its acceptance by Sir Thomas More, knowing that should he submit, no further resistance need be apprehended in any other quarter.

It was on the morning of the 13th of April 1534, that the pursuivant, whose arrival had been so long expected, at length made his ill-omened appearance at the door of the once-happy home of Chelsea, and summoned More to appear that day before the commissioners, who held their sittings at Lambeth. He received the summons with as much composure as though it were an invitation to some

gay banquet ; and, according to his invariable custom before entering on any business of moment, he went to church to be confessed, to hear Mass, and to receive Holy Communion, and then prepared to take boat for Lambeth. But his full heart could not bear to take leave of his family that day as he was ordinarily wont to do. "He had evermore been used," says Roper, "at his departure from his wife and children, whom he tenderly loved, to have them bring him to his boat, and there to kiss them, and bid them all farewell ; but that day he would suffer none of them to follow him forth from the gate, but pulled the wicket after him, and shut them all from him. Margaret had lingered behind the others to take a last farewell ; but her father did not give her the opportunity which she sought. He never turned to look at her or wave his hand as usual, but with a heavy heart and sorrowful countenance entered the boat with his son-in-law. It was his last parting from his happy home, and he knew it well. They sat for a while silent and sorrowful : there was a hard and bitter struggle going on within ; but it was the last rebellion of nature, and it was soon over. Roper, who had been absorbed in his own melancholy reflections as he perceived his father-in-law's unusual sadness, was suddenly roused by feeling his ear pulled and looking up, saw that beloved and venerable face smiling on him with its more wonted expression of glad composure. "Son Roper," he whispered, "I thank our Lord, *the field is won.*" The words puzzled him, for he could not follow the rapid workings of More's mind ; yet loth to seem ignorant, he answered at random, "Sir, I am very glad." But afterwards thinking over the incident, he rightly conjectured that Sir Thomas had alluded to the momentary resistance he had had to offer to the appeals of natural affection, which he had then utterly silenced by the grace and help of God.

At length he arrived at Lambeth, and stood before the commissioners. They were—Boston, the Abbot of Westminster, of whom Widmore says, that "his conscience was not likely to stand in his way on any occasion," Cranmer the primate, Cromwell, and the infamous Audley. Being called on to take the oath, he referred to the existing sta-

tutes, declared himself ready to swear to defend the succession as settled by parliament, and disclaimed censuring any who had taken the oath; adding, however, that he could not swear to all it contained without wounding his conscience. He was remanded for a while, and suffered to walk in the garden whilst the oath was being administered to others. He had the sorrow of beholding a crowd of pusillanimous clergy, among whom were several Bishops, who all took the oath, "without scruple, step, or stay;" and, as he describes the scene in one of his letters, there was the Vicar of Croydon and the whole body of the London clergy, among whom the vicar, by way of a show of gladness, called for drink, after he had sworn, and drank "valde familiariter."\* "Meanwhile," he says, "I tarried in the old burned chamber that looketh into the garden, and would not go down because of the heat. . . . And when they had all played their pageant and were gone out of the place, then was I called in again."

Two only, among those that day summoned before the commissioners, had refused the oath besides himself: one was a certain Dr. Wilson, the king's confessor, whom from his seat in the ruined chamber More beheld led a prisoner from their presence, and "genteely sent straight unto the Tower;" the other was the noble Bishop of Rochester. Our readers will remember that he had already refused the oath of succession, on its first administration to the lords spiritual and temporal. He had been suffered to retire to his palace at Rochester, but four days later was summoned to Lambeth by a letter from the primate. The description which his biographer has left us of his conduct on this occasion is so beautiful, that we cannot resist the temptation of inserting it at length. He sat down calmly and deliberately to put his house in order, as one who was about to die; he made his will, and disposed all things for the comfort of his servants, and then set out for Lambeth. Passing through Rochester, he was met by a multitude of persons, both citizens and countrymen, who crowded about him, asking his blessing, which he gave, riding through their ranks with his white locks all uncovered; they, mean-

\* "Very jollily."

while, weeping like children over that which was at once their misery and his glory. Gently extricating himself from the crowd, he rode on in silence, till he came to the brow of Shooter's Hill, and there dismounting, he sat down to rest and refresh himself with a scanty meal. From the summit of that eminence, he took a last look at the boundaries of his beloved diocese. "We will make good use of our time," he observed cheerfully to his attendants, "and dine in the open air while yet we may." Then once more mounting his horse, he rode on to London. The oath being tendered to him, he begged time to consider his reply; and five days being granted him, he was dismissed to his own house.

Then More was again called, and shown the long list of those who had yielded their assent; and severe threats were used of the extremity of the king's displeasure should he still persist in his obstinacy, and withhold the reasons of his refusal. More replied, that he would readily give his reasons, provided he had the king's assurance that these should not be taken as an additional offence; but this being rejected, and all arguments urged by the commissioners being found useless to make him yield, he was at length given into the custody of the Abbot of Westminster. It is said that even yet the king evinced a disposition to treat him with forbearance; but Queen Anne, by her importunity urged him on to show neither favour nor mercy; and four days later (April 17th, 1534), the oath being once more tendered and refused, More was finally committed prisoner to the Tower. Thither Fisher was also committed, on his absolute refusal to take the oath as it then stood; and thus these two holy confessors found themselves fellow-captives in the same prison, and for the same glorious cause.

As More was being conducted to his prison, the gentleman in whose charge he was observing the gold chain he wore round his neck, advised him to send it home to his family. "Nay," he replied, "if my enemies take me on the field, I am content they should have somewhat for their pains." In fact, he knew well enough that it mattered little whether his personal effects were in the Tower or at his house at Chelsea. That house, according to the iniquitous custom of the time, had already been searched



and plundered by the king's pursuivants; and as he now landed at the Tower Stairs, the process of fleecing was continued by the officers of the lieutenant. One of them demanded his upper garment as a perquisite. "Here it is, Master Porter," answered More with his usual humour, taking off his cap from his head, "and I am sorry it is not a better one." "No, no," answered the porter roughly; "by your leave, sir, it is your coat I must have;" and the prisoner quietly submitted as they stripped his gown from his shoulders. He was allowed the unusual privilege of having an attendant, and chose one of his old servants, named John à Wood, a simple countryman, who could neither read nor write. This man was sworn, should he see or hear any thing against the king, to reveal the same to the lieutenant. The latter treated his noble prisoner with marked respect, and More expressed his gratitude in his usual style. "Master Lieutenant," he said, "I shall as I trust, make no complaints of my fare; but whenever I do, or shall become burdensome, do not spare to thrust me out of your doors."

During the first month of his imprisonment he was suffered to see no one; and his daughter Margaret, to whom the separation was anguish, and who was resolved to obtain admittance to him, hit on an expedient by which she outwitted even the practised craft of Mr. Secretary Cromwell. She determined to address a letter to her father, which she felt sure would be intercepted, in which she introduced expressions whose sense might readily be interpreted as intended to persuade him to yield. The device succeeded. The letter was carried to Cromwell, who, believing that he might practise on the firmness of More through the affections of his daughter, gave immediate orders for her free admittance to her father so long as he should remain a prisoner. When the letter was delivered to More, a pang of anguish shot through him more terrible than any penalty in the power of the tyrant to inflict. That his beloved daughter should demand of him the sacrifice of his conscience,—that she to whom his inmost thoughts had been revealed should so little have comprehended the principles which moved him,—this was a far sorer trial than any which



had yet befallen him. "Our Lord bless you!" he writes in answer; "if I had not been at a firm and fast point this good while before, your lamentable letter had not a little abashed me, surely far above all other things, of which I hear not a few that are terrible; but surely none ever touched me so near, or were so grievous to me, as that *you*, my well-beloved child, should, in such vehement piteous manner, labour to persuade me to the thing wherein of pure necessity, for respect of my own soul, I have so often given you precise answer."

His distress soon abated, however, when Margaret, once admitted to his dungeon, explained the matter. We will not deny that there was something of deception in the plan she had devised: yet we feel confident that the fault, such as it was, will find a ready indulgence from our readers. They met at last,—those two noble hearts, knit fast together through so many years in the tenderest, closest, purest love which is capable of kindling our human nature. The filial tie, so true and lively a representation of the creature's union with its Creator, had acquired an additional sanctity by the new circumstances under which Margaret now beheld her father, and by his new claims upon her veneration. From a child she had loved and honoured him; but now he bore, not in her eyes alone, but in those of all Christian Europe, the character of a confessor for the faith, and of one whose confessorship was soon to be exchanged for the bloody crown of martyrdom. She saw in him a change which, whilst it rendered him not less dear, added something of awe and reverence to the love which filled her heart as she gazed on him. Solitude and suffering, the hourly contemplation of a traitor's death, and a near and abiding sense of the eternity on whose threshold he was standing, as well as the uninterrupted exercise of even more than his usual amount of prayers and austerities, had imparted an almost superhuman expression to his noble features; his quick animal spirits had given place to a sweet and earnest cheerfulness, on which there rested a certain solemnity, which spoke of the end, now not very far off. Taking his daughter by the hand, he made her kneel down by his side; and before commencing one word of familiar talk,

they recited together the Litany and the Penitential Psalms. Then he rose, gazed at her fondly, and sitting down beside her, they mutually poured forth their whole souls to one another. More spoke with his usual cheerfulness, and showed himself as indifferent as ever to the external circumstances of his lot. "They that put me here, Meg," he said, "ween, as I verily believe, that they have done me a high displeasure; but I assure thee, mine own good daughter, had it not been for wife and children, I would long ere this have chosen a straighter cell. Methinks God dealeth with me as with a wanton child, and doth set me on his lap to dandle me."

After this first interview, Margaret was allowed constant access to her father, and it plainly appears that every attempt was made to bend his constancy through her influence. A letter is preserved, addressed to Margaret by her kinswoman Alice Allington, which, together with the reply, gives us an exact account of all that passed between More and his daughter on this subject. It appears that Lord Chancellor Audley, in a visit he had paid to Alice's husband, had artfully expressed his regret that Sir Thomas, by his obstinacy, should be casting away his life, and had thrown out various arguments and subtleties, which he trusted might be conveyed in a persuasive form to More either by Alice or her cousin. Nor was he mistaken. Every word of his conversation was immediately written to Margaret, who, in her next interview with her father, failed not to urge every point so skilfully suggested by Audley. Margaret had herself taken the oath, coupled with the important qualification, "in so far as it was agreeable to the law of God;" and it is plain that, having, in common with the vast majority of even well-intentioned English Catholics of that day, but an imperfect appreciation of the importance of the question involved, she regarded her father's scruples as somewhat overstrained; or it may be that, with all her learning, she had so thoroughly a woman's heart and a woman's head, that her earnest desire to save her father's life prevented her from reasoning very closely at all upon the matter. Certain it is, from her own words, that she pressed every argument in her

power to move him to relent. More heard her with his usual smile. "What, Mistress Eve," he said, "hath my daughter\* Allington played the serpent with you, and with her letter set you to work to tempt your father, and for the love you bear him labour to make him swear against his conscience, and so send him to the devil?" Then, changing his tone to one of earnest sadness, "Daughter Margaret," he continued, "we two have talked this thing over twice or thrice; but touching this thing, I can in no wise do it. Many years I have advised and studied the matter; but I cannot hear or see that which shall move me to change my mind. There is no remedy; God hath placed me in this strait, that I must either deadly displease Him, or abide whatever He wills to fall on me." This expression is very remarkable, for it plainly proves the overwhelming importance which More attached to the whole question. There have not been wanting those who would refuse this great man the merit of having died for conscience' sake, and who have attempted to represent him as in no way suffering on any religious grounds. His own words, faithfully reported by Margaret's pen, are his best defence. Taking up the letter in which Audley's arguments were set forth, he read it once again. "His lordship thinketh this thing but a trifle," he said; "and as you, Margaret, told me but now, so think many whom for their learning and virtue I not a little esteem. And yet, daughter, though I should see my Lord of Rochester himself to swear the oath before me, it would be but little to me. I pin myself to no man's back. Some may act through favour, and some through fear; and some may frame for himself a conscience, and think that, while he did it for fear, God would forgive him; and some, peradventure, may think that they will repent and be shriven, and so God shall remit it to them. But in good faith, Margaret, I can use no such ways in so great a matter. And this much for thy comfort will I say, my daughter, that my own conscience in this matter is such as may well stand with mine own salvation, whereof, Meg. I am as sure as that there is a God in heaven. Therefore, as for all the rest,—goods,

\* The daughter of his wife Alice by her first husband.

lands, and life itself (if the chance should so fortune),—since this conscience is sure for me, I verily trust in God that He shall rather strengthen me to bear the loss than put my soul in peril.” Margaret remained silent and sorrowful; words so grand and lofty coming from *his* lips convinced her that her last hope was gone, and that the solemn convictions of his conscience were things too sacred for her ever to wish to overrule. “I was very sad,” she writes; “as I promise you, sister, my heart was full heavy for the peril of his person,—for, in faith, I feared not for his soul.” More watched her countenance; and reassuming his accustomed tone of gaiety, “Why, how now, daughter Margaret!” he said, “how now, mother Eve! Sit you musing with some serpent upon some new persuasion to offer father Adam the apple once again?” In spite of her anguish, Margaret could not resist his pleasantry, but answered him in his own strain. “In good faith, father,” she replied, “I can no more. I am, as Cressida saith in Chaucer, even at my wit’s end. I know not what more to say, unless I could persuade you with Master Harry Patenson’s reasoning. For when he heard you were still in the Tower because you would not swear, he waxed angry, and said, ‘Why, what aileth him, that he will not swear? Wherefore doth he stick to swear? I have sworn myself.’ And even so, father, may I not say with Master Harry, ‘Why should you refuse to swear? for I have taken the oath myself.’” At this More laughed heartily, and said, “That word was like Eve too, for she offered Adam no worse fruit than she had eaten herself.” Then, resuming a graver tone, he sought to comfort her. “Meg,” he said “(though it soundeth like a riddle), there is a case where a man may lose his head, and yet have no harm. I have not in this matter forgotten the counsel of our Lord in the Gospel, that we should count the cost ere yet we begin to build. Full many a restless night, Margaret, while my wife slept, have I weighed and counted, ere yet I closed my eyes, what peril might befall me; and I am sure no care came heavier than mine. In thinking on it, daughter, I had oftentimes a right heavy heart; but yet I thank my Lord that for all that I never thought to

change." She ventured to hint that a time might come, however, when his mind *might* change, and that then it would be all too late. The words seemed to touch him to the quick. "Too late!" he cried; "I beseech our Lord, that if ever I make such a change, it may be too late indeed. In this world, I pray that I may never benefit by such a change. And albeit I know well that for my sins I am well worthy that God should let me slip, yet I cannot but trust His merciful goodness. I will not mistrust His grace; and if it be His gracious mind that I suffer in this cause, I doubt not but that in His high goodness He will make it to serve as a release of the pains of purgatory. Mistrust Him, Meg, will I not, even though I should feel me faint. Yea, if I feel my fear even at the point to overthrow me, yet will I remember how St. Peter began to sink for his want of faith, and then will I, like him, call on Christ for help; and He will set His holy hand on me, and in the stormy seas will hold me up from drowning. I wot well, Margaret, without my own fault He will not let me be lost. But if He suffer me ever to perish, yet shall I then serve to praise His justice. Wherefore, mine own daughter, trouble not thy mind for any thing that can happen to me in this life, for nothing can happen but what God will; and I know, and am sure, that whatsoever it be, be it never so bad, it shall indeed be the best. And so, my good child, commend me to all my friends; and I pray right heartily that you will all serve God, and be merry and rejoice in Him. And if aught happen to me that shall grieve you, pray for me to God, but be not troubled; pray for me, as heartily I shall for all of you, that we may meet together again in heaven, where we shall make merry for ever, and never have trouble more."

Margaret was forced to yield; and her reply to a letter which he addressed her on the same subject shows that his arguments had more than satisfied her. In it she says how she has read again and again "his most fruitful and delectable letter, the faithful messenger of his virtuous mind, rid from all corrupt love of worldly things, and fast knit only to the love of God; who, I doubt not, mine own father," she continues, "will hold His hand over you, and



preserve you both in body and soul now, when you have cast off all earthly consolations, and resigned yourself willingly, gladly, and fully, for His love, to His holy protection. And further, what think you has comforted us since your departure from us? surely the experience we have had of your life past and godly conversation; being sure, moreover, of the continuance of the same to the rest and gladness of your heart, now devoid of all earthly dregs, garnished with the noble vesture of heavenly virtues, and a pleasant palace for the repose of the Holy Spirit of God." It is clear that she had at last resigned all hopes of saving his life, and had entered into the spirit with which he himself had put off all cares and thoughts of earth, and was calmly awaiting his death-sentence, as a summons to God long anticipated and now wearily desired. She concludes with the trust that they may be reunited in the bliss of heaven; and signs herself, "Your own loving obedient daughter and beadswoman, Margaret Roper, who desireth above all worldly things to be in John à Wood's place, to do you some service."

More was careful to point out to his daughter the utter illegality of his imprisonment. No statute had as yet prescribed the *particular form* of the oath to be taken by all the king's subjects; and Henry, taking advantage of this omission, proceeded to model and add to it according to his pleasure. Thus a clause was soon afterwards appended by which the clergy were called on to acknowledge the king in express terms as supreme head of the Church, and to renounce the authority of the Bishop of Rome; and, by a bungling piece of legislation, a second statute had to be passed to confirm this amended oath. Moreover, it was declared high treason for any one to speak *maliciously* against the supremacy; the word "*maliciously*" being inserted by the Commons. From that time the acknowledgment of the marriage and the supremacy were included under one oath; and the denial of the one seems to have been considered equivalent to an attack upon the other.

Margaret continued to visit her father from time to time, and to convey to him such means as she could raise for his support, either from the charity of friends or by her

own exertions. One day, as they stood together at his prison-window, they beheld three Carthusian monks led forth to execution for denial of the supremacy. "See, Meg," exclaimed her father, "how these blessed men go forth to their deaths, as cheerful as bridegrooms to their marriage; surely God thinketh not thy silly father worthy of so quick release." Some while after, Dame Alice herself obtained leave to visit her husband; and as she entered his chamber, she saluted him in most characteristic language. "What, the good gear, Mr. More!" she said; "I marvel that you who are accounted a wise man should play the fool, and choose to abide in this filthy prison among the rats and mice, when you might be abroad at your liberty, if you would but do as others have done. And, seeing that you have a right goodly house at Chelsea, I wonder why, in God's name, you tarry longer here." "Alice," replied Sir Thomas, "tell me this one thing,—is not this house as near heaven as my own?" This was too lofty a strain for the dame, who was somewhat excited; but having no very apt argument to bring forward in reply, she contented herself with one of her favourite ejaculations. "Twittle twattle!" she said contemptuously, "will this gear never be left?" "Very well, Mrs. Alice," he continued, "and if it be as I have said, why should I not be at my ease here as well as there. Surely were I but buried in the ground for some years, and then to arise and go to that gay house of mine, its indwellers would quickly bid me begone. And why, then, should I set so much store by a house which will so quickly forget its master?"

In spite of every watchfulness on the part of his jailors, More continued to exchange letters with two of his fellow-prisoners, Dr. Wilson, the king's former confessor, and his venerable friend Bishop Fisher. That holy prelate, now in his eightieth year, was suffering from every extremity of want. Marked out as the special victim of Anne's malignant vengeance, no mercy had been shown him; his very clothes had been taken from him, and a few rags given him in exchange hardly sufficient to cover him. He was left without the common necessities of life, and More from time to time sent him portions of his own food.

Meanwhile the efforts of the king's party were unceasing to win More even yet to submission. The commissioners twice visited him in his prison, and Cromwell had several interviews with him alone. Again and again did both More and Fisher reply, in answer to the urgent representations of their visitors, that they would swear to observe any law of succession settled by the Legislature; but they refused to give their reasons for not taking the oath as then expressed, simply because by so doing, and thus stating their belief in the unlawfulness of the marriage with Anne, they would, according to the iniquitous statute recently passed, have incurred the penalties of high treason.

According to the practice of the times, no device was spared to entrap More into such a declaration. Cromwell asked him if he had not read the statute in which the king was pronounced the head of the Church; and inquired what he thought of it. More, however, steadily declined giving any reply to this artful question; saying, that it was not for him to dispute concerning the titles of either the king or the Pope. But Cromwell demanded a more exact answer, nothing less being enough to content the king; in other words, More was called upon, by *command* of the king, to utter an opinion which, *if he gave*, would be brought against him as *evidence of the crime of high treason*. After their conversation was ended, Cromwell was large in his promises that no advantage should be taken of any thing that had passed. Rich,\* the king's solicitor-general, was next let loose upon the noble pri-

\* The career of Rich was, if possible, more deeply dyed in iniquity than that of Audley himself. We must refer our readers to the singularly unprejudiced account of these two men who successively disgraced the chancellorship after the death of More, as they will find the facts recorded in the pages of Lord Campbell's Biography. Rich was one of the great instruments for carrying on the Reformation in the reign of Edward VI. It was he, too, who, stained as he was with countless villanies, waited on the Princess Mary with the royal command that "she should no more use the private Mass, nor do any divine service other than the law prescribed;" and it was he who received from her lips the heroic reply, that "she would obey the king in all that conscience permitted, and would die to do him good; but that she would sooner lay her head on the block than use any other service than that of the Catholic Church."

soner. This wretch, the worthy accomplice of Audley in all his deeds of infamy, came (June 12, 1535) with an order to seize and take away all Sir Thomas's books. Whilst his companions were packing up these, the only consolations of his captivity, Rich entered, as though carelessly, into conversation with him, and affected a friendly tone. "You are a learned man, Mr. More," he said; "I would fain ask you one question: if the realm were to accept me as king by act of parliament, would you acknowledge my title?" "Yes," replied More, "I would." "Well," continued Rich, "and suppose they declared me Pope, would you not take me for Pope?" "As to that," replied More, "the parliament has power to do the *first*; but for the rest, let me in my turn ask you, supposing a law were passed that God should not be God, I suppose you, Mr. Rich, would give it your assent?" "No," replied Rich, "because no parliament has power to affirm such a thing." Here More left the matter; but Rich invented a sequel to the conversation, which he then duly reported to the council, declaring that Sir Thomas had concluded with the words, "And no more, Mr. Rich, has the parliament the power to declare the king supreme head of the Church." Upon which report he was afterwards indicted of high treason, as having "maliciously, traitorously, and devilishly" denied the king's supremacy. We shall presently see in what manner More met this accusation on his trial; we only now allude to the circumstance to give the reader some idea of the way in which his solitude was beset by his crafty enemies, who did their best to wile him into incautious admissions which they might afterwards manufacture into overt acts of treason.

By the seizure of his books, More had lost his chief consolation. With habitual humour, he closed his windows, saying, "When the wares and the tools are taken away, what is to be done but shut up the shop?" So long as his "tools" were left him, he failed not to use them, and even when pens were gone, he contrived to supply their place with a coal. During the time of his imprisonment, which lasted altogether fifteen months, he wrote *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, and had begun a

treatise on our Lord's Passion, when his writing-materials were taken from him. "After that time" (says his grandson), "he applied himself wholly to meditation, for which purpose he kept his room darkened." Nevertheless, he continued to write various prayers and pious effusions on such stray morsels of paper as he could lay hands on, besides a considerable number of letters. These were afterwards kept by his descendants as precious relics; and the characters traced in coal by the hands of More were drawn over in ink, and so preserved. Some of his prayers and meditations written in this manner are published among his works. One of them bears evidence of having been written by way of persuading himself to a perfect forgetfulness of the injuries he was daily enduring. "But," he says, "the matter requires to be more considered than I can now conveniently write, *having no other pen than a coal.*" True to his nature, he makes his homely writing-materials a matter for jesting; and, writing of his beloved daughter, remarks, that "a *whole peck of coal* could not suffice to do her justice."

His communication with Bishop Fisher was at length discovered, and the Bishop's servant who had carried their letters was closely imprisoned, and threatened with death. He was a simple countryman, and is said to have asked his keeper if there had been a new statute made for hanging a man for serving his master. The laugh which his simplicity raised obtained him his liberty, on condition, however, that he was the bearer of no more letters.

One of the dishonest devices resorted to by the council was to represent to each of the prisoners that his companion had yielded, hoping by this falsehood to persuade them to its will. Fisher was the first on whom the experiment was tried by the commissioners. He was summoned before them; and after being severely reproved for his late correspondence with More, they informed him that the ex-chancellor had taken the oath, and that therefore he could do no otherwise than follow his friend's example. Fisher, simple-hearted and unsuspecting, believed their report; but it only added to his sorrows, without in the least shaking his constancy. "I grieve," he said, "that his courage hath failed



him; and yet I am not the man to blame him, not being beset by the temptations of wife and children, to which he hath yielded. Nevertheless it affecteth me in no wise; for unless I would make shipwreck of my soul and conscience, I cannot take your oath." He was then dismissed, and closely confined in an adjoining chamber; and it was given out that he too had taken the oath, and had been afterwards admitted to kiss the king's hand.

This new fabrication was designed as a means of entrapping More. Margaret Roper was even then at the door of the council-chamber with a petition on her father's behalf, which she had courageously resolved to present to the lords with her own hands. Audley, who knew her business, went out to speak with her, and artfully expressed his regret at the obstinacy of her father, especially since even Fisher had now seen his error, and taken the oath. "With that," says Fisher's biographer, "she gave a spring for joy, and asked him, was he sure that my lord of Rochester had taken the oath? 'Yes,' said the chancellor, *'and more than that; he is now with the king, and you will see him at liberty soon and in high favour.'*" She waited to hear no more, but hurried to her father and told him all. Fisher, so stout and constant, so holy and so high of principle, had yielded his consent, and would he still refuse? But More was not so easily deceived. "You are a fool, Meg," he said, "and not used to these sleights: but I know their tricks; they think to take me in a puppet-snatch, but they are deceived; and I tell thee more, if the Bishop had taken the oath, he would be no precedent for sin." But presently he was himself again called before the commissioners, who related the same false story with a deliberation which would have been difficult to men less practised in deception than Rich and Audley. More asked to speak with the Bishop; he should do so, it was replied, so soon as he had taken the oath. He begged to see his signature; it had been carried to the king, was Audley's unblushing answer. "Then, my lords, let me plainly tell you," said More, "that I do not believe my lord of Rochester has either subscribed his hand or taken the oath; *and if he*

*had done both, I could do neither.*" They were then both taken back to the Tower.

The winter now drew on, and brought with it many sufferings, especially to the aged prelate. A touching letter addressed by him to Cromwell is preserved, in which he begs for requisite food and clothing, as well as for the further indulgence of his books of devotion, and license to make his confessions to some priest before the holy time of Christmas. It does not appear that any of his requests were granted. His clothes and books, and every movable property he possessed, had been already seized by the king. With the books, "the like of which were not to be found in the possession of any private man in Christendom," the officers filled thirty-two large tubs; and as they roamed through the house searching for every thing of any value, they suddenly espied a chest locked and bound with iron, which stood in his private chamber. This they conjectured must contain some great treasure; but on breaking it open, they found, instead of gold and silver, a hair-shirt and some disciplines,—to their great disappointment, and to Fisher's sore vexation, who said, when he heard of what had happened, that if he had not forgotten it in his haste, that chest should never have been found.

Paul III., who had succeeded Clement in the pontifical chair, entertained so deep a veneration for the merits and sufferings of the Bishop of Rochester, that in the first year of his consecration he created him a cardinal. When the news of this reached England, Cromwell was despatched to the new cardinal's prison to question him on his sentiments on the subject. "How say you, my lord of Rochester," said the secretary; "if the Pope shall send you the cardinal's hat, would you accept it?" "Sir," replied Fisher with his usual undaunted courage, "I know myself all unworthy of such a dignity; nevertheless, assure yourself, if such a thing did happen, I would do my best to improve it to the assistance of the Catholic Church, and *would receive it on my knees.*" This answer was reported to Henry, who had perhaps hoped for some less respectful expressions touching the Holy See; and, enraged at the unbroken spirit of the Bishop, he exclaimed, "Yea, saith he

so indeed? well, let the Pope send him the hat when he will, I will see to it that he hath never a head to set it on."

The trial of the two prisoners was now resolved on, and it was determined to begin with Fisher. On the 7th of May, a special commission having been issued for this purpose under the great seal, he was placed at the bar, where, through infirmity and age, he could scarcely support himself, and there charged with having maliciously spoken these words: "The king our sovereign lord is not supreme head of the Church of England." The witness for the crown was Rich, the solicitor-general, who declared that Fisher had spoken these words to him on the occasion of a visit he had paid him in the Tower. Let our readers judge of the astonishment with which the prisoner listened to this allegation, the explanation of which is best given in the speech which he addressed to the court by way of defence "Mr. Rich," he said, "I marvel to hear you come and bear witness against me of those words. My lords, this man came to me on a secret message which he brought me from the king, wherein his grace desired to know my full opinion on the matter. But I put him in mind of the new act of parliament, which might endanger me much, should I speak any thing against its provisions. Whereon he assured me that the king willed me to know that, *upon his honour, and on the word of a king*, nothing I should say unto this his messenger should be deemed against the statute, seeing it was but a declaration of my mind unto his own person; and the messenger added his solemn promise that my words should be repeated to no living soul, but only to the king." Rich did not attempt to contradict this statement, merely saying, "he had done no more than his Majesty had commanded;" and then, as counsel for the crown, he argued, that assuming the Bishop's story to be true, it was no discharge in law for a direct violation of the statute. On this Audley ruled, and all the other judges concurred, that "this message and promise from the king neither did nor could discharge him; but that in so speaking against the king's supremacy, *yea, though at the king's own command*, he had committed treason, and that nothing could

save him from death but the king's pardon." After a few more objections, overruled by the same hand, and in the same atrocious spirit, Audley summed up; and "so aggravated the case to the jury, making it *so heinous and dangerous a treason*, that they easily perceived what verdict they must give." Yet many of his hearers, and some even of his judges, were melted to tears, when they saw this venerable man condemned to a shameful death on such evidence.

Fisher's execution took place on the 21st of June. We scarce know of any martyrdom whose story is more beautiful than that of this heroic and venerable man. When the day dawned at last, he rose with alacrity, and putting off his hair-shirt, dressed himself with a care so unusual, that his attendant could not restrain his surprise. "Dost thou not mark it is our marriage-day?" replied the aged prelate; "it becometh us, therefore, to use some solemnity." Privation and long imprisonment had rendered him too weak to stand or walk; but whilst the soldiers were assembling, and the lieutenant and sheriffs were making their preparations for departure, he supported himself by leaning against his dungeon-wall, and took the Breviary into his hand for the last time. "O Lord," he exclaimed, "this is the last time I shall ever open this book: let some comfortable words now chance unto me, that I, Thy poor servant, may glorify Thee in this last hour." He opened it at these words of the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel: "*Hæc est autem vita æterna, ut cognoscant te solum verum Deum et quem misisti Jesum Christum. Ego te glorificavi super terram, opus consummavi quod dedisti mihi,*" &c.\* "Enough," he said; "this is sufficient learning for me to my life's end." They carried him to the scaffold, which when he reached, he seemed filled with sudden and supernatural strength, and mounted it with a firm and unflinching step. The south-eastern sun of the summer morning was shining brightly on his face, whereon

\* "Now this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do," &c. *John* xvii. 3, &c.



he lifted up his hands and ejaculated, "*Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini; et facies vestræ non confundentur.*"\* When they had taken off his outer garments, they gazed with wonder to behold his frame wasted with suffering and austerity; "he seemed a very image of death." "I come," he said, "to die for the faith of Christ's holy Catholic Church." After a few prayers, he received the single blow which severed his head from his body. The corpse was immediately stripped, and left lying on the scaffold for the rest of the day; it was then buried, with every circumstance of disgrace, in a grave in Allhallows Church, which the soldiers dug with their halberds. It is said that the head was carried to Anne Boleyn, by her own command, before it was set up on the city-gates. She gazed at it contemptuously, saying, "Is this the head which hath so often exclaimed against me? I trow never more shall it do me harm;" and with that, striking at the mouth with the back of her hand, a projecting tooth inflicted a slight erasure of the skin, which caused a wound, the mark of which she never lost to the hour of her death.† Our readers will remember More's suggestive comparison of this unhappy woman with the daughter of Herodias; he little thought how closely she was to complete the parallel.

The first of July had been fixed for the trial of Sir Thomas More. This was felt to be a more difficult affair to carry through; for More's legal knowledge, and the power of his eloquence, gave his judges every reason to fear defeat. On the appointed day, he was conducted on foot from the Tower to Westminster Hall. There he was placed at the bar of the court, where but a short while before he had presided as judge; and the spectators could not restrain their tears as they beheld his changed aspect. Dressed in a coarse woollen gown, he leant for support upon a staff; his hair was gray, his face pale and emaciated; every thing bespoke the sufferings he had endured, except the unaltered cheerfulness which shone upon his faded features. "No such culprit had stood at any European bar

\* "Approach unto him, and be enlightened; and your faces shall not be confounded."

† Bayley's *Life of Fisher*.



for a thousand years," observes Sir James Mackintosh. During the three centuries which have since elapsed, statesmen, prelates, and even kings have stood at the same bar; yet amid all our judicial murders, no name will be found on the long list of victims more illustrious than that of More. It has been somewhere remarked, that whereas in other countries assassination has been resorted to as a means of satisfying the vengeance of tyrants, in England the more decent hypocrisy of a state trial has been substituted in its stead. It may be questioned whether the infamy of false witness and deliberate injustice does not render our English method of assassination the more detestable.

When the enormous indictment had been read through, which was at last reducible to the original charges of having given an opinion against the king's marriage, of having refused to acknowledge the supremacy, and *of having spoken against it*, Audley called on him to submit to the king's clemency. The charges were then proceeded with; but according to the statutes, the last was the only one which was sufficient in law to entail the penalty of treason. It was also the most impossible to prove; for More, in his extreme caution, had avoided committing himself to any expression of his mind on that subject, even in his familiar discourse with his daughter. Being suffered to speak in his own defence, he calmly and judiciously examined the charges separately, and exposed their frivolity with triumphant skill. He reminded his judges that the very terms of the indictment accused him of *refusing to disclose his opinion* whether the king were head of the Church or not, observing, that "neither the statute nor any other law can punish a man for holding his peace." Here the attorney-general interrupted him, saying, that though they had no *words* to object against him, yet they had *his silence*, which was the evident sign of a *malicious mind*. This word *malice*, says Cresacre, was in the mouth of the whole court; but no man could produce either word or deed to prove it, and More reminded his sapient judge that silence was commonly supposed to give *consent*.

But the servant of Christ was not long to lack a false

witness ; it was provided in the person of the solicitor general Rich, who was as ready to play the part as he had been to break trust and honour in his evidence against Fisher. He accordingly *entered the witness-box*, and offered to declare circumstances which would convict the prisoner of the crime of treason. He then related the conversation we have before given, adding, that at its conclusion Sir Thomas had deliberately declared, that no parliament could make the king supreme head of the Church. We need scarcely say any thing to prove the manifest falsehood of this assertion ; More had avoided any expression of his opinions on this great matter to those who were deepest in his confidence, it was therefore most unlikely he should disclose them to a man of such character as the solicitor-general. His reply would have crushed his accuser to the dust, if the conscience of the miserable man had not been too hardened to feel disgrace. After looking for a moment upon Rich with indignant surprise, he turned to the bench, and stretching forth his arm, said with unusual earnestness : “ My lords, if I were a man who did not regard an oath, I need not now be standing in this place. And if this oath of yours, Mr. Rich, be true, then do I pray that I may never see the face of God ! which otherwise I would not say to gain the world.” Having related the conversation as it really passed, he continued, addressing the witness, who must have cowered before his withering expressions of contempt, “ In truth, Mr. Rich, I am more sorry for your perjury than my own peril. Know this, that neither I, nor any man else that I know of, ever took you to be a man of such credit, as to communicate any matter of weight to you. As you know, I have been long acquainted with your life and manner of conversation. We dwelt long together in the same parish, where, as you yourself could tell,—and I grieve that you compel me to say it,—you were always esteemed light of your tongue, a dicer, and of no commendable fame, either there or in the Temple. Therefore, my lords,” he continued, turning to his judges, “ is it likely that I should trust this man rather than the king and his noble councillors ? that I should utter my mind to *him* on this matter of the royal

supremacy, a thing which I never did and never would reveal after the making of the statute, even to the king himself or his councillors, who at sundry times were sent to me in the Tower from his own person for this very purpose? And what I have kept from them, think you I would have revealed to *him*?" He then proceeded to prove that, even granting the accusation, there was no proof of *malice*; and concluded by reminding them that the confidence ever shown him by the king, and his many services, might be taken as some evidence against so slanderous a surmise. Rich, abashed at last, was fain to call his companions who had been with him during his visit to the Tower, and appeal to them in support of his story; but they both declared they had been too busy packing the books to hear what had passed. Nothing, therefore, was left but for the presiding judge to sum up; a task exactly suited to the genius of Audley. His strong point to the jury was, that even if the speech reported did not actually take place, it *at least represented the known sentiments of the prisoner*. This was enough. After a quarter of an hour's deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of guilty; "for," says Cresacre, "they knew what the king would have done in the case." This was the rule in those days for judge and jury; falsehood and treachery, and murder itself, were all waded through without hesitation, because "the king would have it so." Audley could not restrain his delight, and, forgetting the established forms of law, began at once to pronounce sentence. But More interrupted him with a calm gentle dignity. "My lord," he said, "in my time, the manner was in such cases to ask the prisoner if he had aught to allege against the passing of his sentence." The chancellor was forced to own his mistake, and put the usual question. More then brought forward several objections against the legality of the statute, but it is needless to say that they were overruled. "You hear, my lords," exclaimed the chancellor; "what further need have we of witnesses? he is guilty of death." And so, with the words of the deicide Jews upon his lips, this infamous judge proceeded to pronounce a sentence which the Protestant biographer of the lords chancellors has declared

to be "the blackest crime ever perpetrated in England under the forms of law."

Whilst the revolting sentence was being uttered, More listened with a calm and constant countenance, and at its close exclaimed, like one anxious to relieve his mind of a weight which had oppressed it, "Well, seeing that I am now condemned, God knows how justly, I will freely speak for the disburdening of my conscience. When I perceived that the king's pleasure was to sift out *whence* the Pope's authority was derived, I confess I studied seven years to find out the truth thereof; and I could not find in the writings of any one doctor of the Church that a layman was, or ever could be, the head thereof. No realm can make a particular law incompatible with the general law of the Catholic Church. Nay, it was contrary to the unrepealed statutes of the realm; for by Magna Charta it was declared, that 'the English Church should be free, and have all her rights and liberties untouched.' And it is contrary to the sacred oath which the king and every Christian prince hath sworn at his coronation." "How," interrupted Audley, "do you thus account yourself of more learning than all the bishops and nobles of England?" "My lord," replied Sir Thomas, "for one bishop on your side, I will produce a hundred against you; and against one realm, the common consent of Christendom." "Now, indeed, Sir Thomas," exclaimed the Duke of Norfolk, "you display your obstinate and malicious mind." "Not so, noble sir," replied More; "I speak but for just necessity, and the discharge of my conscience. But more I will not say, except that as the blessed apostle Paul consented to the death of the martyr Stephen, yea and kept the clothes of them that stoned him, and yet they two be now blessed saints in heaven, and shall there continue friends to all eternity, so I verily trust and pray, that though your lordships have condemned me this day as my judges, we may yet meet merrily in heaven; and may God preserve my lord the king, and send him faithful councillors!"

His speech ended, they led him from the bar, the axe being borne before him with its edge turned towards him. The fresh air which blew from the river seemed to revive

the prisoner after the stifling heat of the crowded court, and he spoke in his usual cheerful and familiar strain with his humane gaoler Sir William Kingston. But Kingston's kind heart was very heavy, and More observed the tears stealing fast down his manly cheeks. He tried to comfort him, forgetful of himself; so that Kingston, in speaking of it afterwards to Roper, observed, "I was ashamed of myself to be so weak, when *his* heart was stout and fearless; *he* comforting *me*, who should rather at such a time have been his comforter." They took water for the Tower; but ere they descended into the boat, his son forced his way through the crowd, and kneeling at his feet, craved his blessing. More blessed and kissed him, not without tears. But a yet more trying scene awaited him at the Tower Wharf. Margaret, his best-beloved child, was there, watching for his approach; and as soon as she caught sight of his venerated figure, she ran to meet him without thought or care of herself, and passing through the guards who surrounded him, cast herself on his neck, unable to utter a word beyond the simple ejaculation, "My father!" He blessed and comforted her with a few simple words, bidding her submit to the good and blessed will of God. But she had no sooner parted from him than, not satisfied with that farewell, she turned back again; and More, now fairly overcome, remained speechless, while the tears chased themselves down his cheeks, and the guards themselves and the crowds of bystanders were fain to turn away and weep.

Margaret Giggs, his adopted child, and an old servant of the Ropers', now came with their greetings. "It was homely, but lovingly done," he observed afterwards, alluding to the unceremonious way in which the poor old waiting-woman had expressed her devotion and her sorrow.

The bitterness of death had passed with the last embrace he had given to his darling child; that parting over, he regained his cheerfulness and accustomed gaiety, and looked on to the short passage between him and eternity with a calm untroubled eye. He could even jest as of old with those who visited him, and find pleasant ways of getting rid of such as were importunate. Thus, an officious courtier having teased him for the space of an hour with



exhortations that he would change his mind, Sir Thomas at last assured him that he changed it. Before the day passed, the news was carried to the king, and fresh messengers returned to inquire what he meant. "Good sirs," replied the prisoner, "you are too hasty in taking up my words; I had minded to have shaven my beard, but afterwards I bethought me that my beard should fare no better than my head, and that was the only change I spoke of."

Even yet the royal commissioners had not done with him; it was felt that more would be gained by his recantation than by his death; and certain persons were deputed to wait on him in the Tower, and submit a long list of interrogations to him, which he answered with his accustomed prudence and veracity. It was then told him that, out of mercy and favour, the more hideous portions of his sentence would be commuted, and that he would die by simple decapitation, such being the king's most gracious pleasure. "I thank the king for his kindness," he replied, with his irrepressible humour; "but I pray God to preserve my friends from the like favours."

A few of his thoughts and ejaculations at this solemn time have been preserved, scratched possibly on the walls of his dungeon, or written with a coal on any scraps of paper which he could find.

"Who would save his life to displease God? If thou so savest thy life, how deadly wouldst thou hate it on the morrow, and feel heavy at thy heart that thou hadst not died the day before! If thou hast been with Christ at the wine-feast of Galilee, shrink not to stand with Him before the judgment-seat of Pilate. The moment approaches when thou shalt rejoice with Him in the revelation of His glory."

The 6th of July was appointed for his execution. On the night before, he wrote one last letter to his daughter. He has a word for all: for his son John, whose filial conduct on the day of his condemnation he praises, saying, that "he liked well his natural fashion;" for his daughter-in-law Clement, to whom he sends "an arithmetical stone" as a parting gift; for Dorothy Colly, the old servant; and above all, for herself. "I encumber you much,

my good Margaret," he says, "yet I would be sorry it should be longer than to-morrow. To-morrow is St. Thomas's eve,\* and to-morrow *I long to go to God*: it were a day meet and convenient for me. I never liked your manner better than when you kissed me last; for I love where daughterly love and dear charity have no leisure to look to worldly courtesy. I pray God to be good to you, as He hath great cause." These precious words were written with a coal; we need not stay to guess their value to her to whom they were addressed. Together with the letter he sent her his hair-shirt and discipline, unwilling that curious eyes should discover them after his death. "Having now finished the good fight," observes Cresacre, "he sent away the weapons of his warfare."†

The last day dawned at length; early on the morning of the 6th of July, Sir Thomas Pope came with a message from the king and council that he was to die at nine o'clock, and must prepare himself accordingly. More thanked him, and prayed but for one favour,—that his daughter Margaret might be present at his funeral. It was granted; but a command was added, that the king's pleasure was, that "the prisoner should use few words at his execution;" for even yet the tyrant trembled at the possible result of his victim's eloquence. More's thoughts, however, were little disposed for much speaking. He was weary to get through the business that lay before him, and to go to

\* It deserves notice, that all his life More had chosen as his special patron St. Thomas of Canterbury, his namesake, his predecessor in the office of chancellor, and one like him a glorious martyr for the rights and liberties of the Church. He took comfort and encouragement from the singular coincidence of his being called on to suffer on the eve of the feast of his great patron's translation, which was also the Octave day of the Prince of the Apostles, "for whose supremacy," observes his grandson, "he suffered martyrdom."

† This hair-shirt was left by Margaret Roper at her death to her cousin Margaret Clements, a nun in the Augustinian Convent at Louvain. At the time of the French Revolution this community removed to Spetsbury in Dorsetshire, where the interesting relic is still preserved entire, with the exception of one of the sleeves, which has been presented by the Augustinian nuns to the convent of St. Dominic at Stone in Staffordshire. The shirt is made of hogs' bristles twisted into a kind of net.

God ; and so joyously did he look on the summons to die, that he changed his apparel, and put on a certain silken gown which had been given him, since he had come to the Tower, by an Italian friend, Bonvisi ; for he would fain go forth to his death as to a banquet. Then he knelt down, and spent some time in earnest prayer. Kingston entered presently ; and the silken gown at once caught his eye. He counselled him to put it off, saying, that the fellow who would take it as his perquisite was but a "javill." "And why, Mr. Lieutenant, should I account him a 'javill,' " answered More, "seeing he will this day do me such a benefit? He should have my gown, were it cloth-of-gold : I mind well that St. Cyprian gave thirty pieces of gold to the man that did him this good turn." Kingston, however, had his way, and changed the silk gown for one of frieze ; but Sir Thomas put by a golden angel for the headsman, in token that he bore him no ill-will, "but loved him exceedingly." At nine o'clock he left the Tower in company with the lieutenant. His beard had grown long from neglect ; his face was pale and sunken, but his clear bright eye beamed with its unquenchable vivacity. In his hand he carried a red cross, and his looks were cast towards heaven. As they passed the house of a woman who had dealt with More in former times, she ran out and offered him a cup of wine. He refused it gently, saying, "Christ at His Passion drank no wine, but vinegar and gall." Another woman had the want of feeling to follow him, teasing him with a story of some books she had given into his keeping when he was chancellor. He turned to her with his usual patience, and said, "My good woman, in an hour's space his Majesty will rid me of the care I have had of thy papers." His enemies had had the meanness to bribe another person to hoot after him, and cry out that he had done her an injustice when he was judge. "I mind you well," he replied ; "and were I again to give sentence in your cause, I would not alter a word."

Very touching were the words of another who met him on the road ; a citizen of Winchester, who, sorely tempted with thoughts of despair, threw himself at the

feet of the martyr, and asked his prayers. "Go," said More in his sweet cheerful tone,—“go and pray for me, and I will pray for you.” He went away with confidence, says Cresacre, and was never troubled with those thoughts again.

They had now reached the scaffold. More looked at it steadily, and then said to the lieutenant, as he laid his hand on his shoulder, “I pray you, sir, to see me safe up, and for my coming down I will shift for myself.” He would have spoken a few words to the people, but the sheriff interrupted him; he therefore contented himself with asking their prayers, and calling them to witness that he died in the faith of holy Church, and loyal to his king and his God. Then he knelt down, and repeated with an unflinching voice the *Miserere* Psalm. This ended, the executioner timidly approached; but More kissed him as a dear friend, and bade him pluck up his spirit and fear nothing. “My neck,” he added with a smile, “is very short; see therefore that thou strike not awry, to save thy credit.” Those who stood by marvelled at his manner of speech, and succeeding generations have seemed in doubt whether to admire or to take scandal at such jesting at such a time. But it was in truth the happiest day of a not unhappy life; it was the end steadily looked forward to from the first; and to More, who had lived with his heart in heaven, death seemed scarcely a matter to treat with solemnity, still less with fear. The thought of it had been ever with him; and now that it was come, he jested with it as with a dear familiar friend. The executioner would have covered his eyes; but he refused this, and covered them himself with a cloth he had brought for the purpose: then laying his head on the block, he removed his beard out of the way; “It at least,” he said, “has committed no treason.” They were his last words; another moment a single blow of the axe had severed his head from his body, and the noble martyr had passed to God, with a joyful smile upon those lips which never yet had learnt to wear the semblance of repining.

More's headless body was laid in St. Peter's chapel in the Tower. The head itself was placed on London Bridge;

but Margaret, whose love endowed her with an heroic courage and determination, resolved at all hazards to possess herself of this precious relic. Modern writers have generally omitted the narrative given by Cresacre of his aunt's conduct on this occasion, probably from a notion that the circumstances he details have in them something too much of the marvellous. Our readers must judge for themselves on this point; but the incident has too much of deep and pathetic interest for us to pass it without notice.

She had charged herself with the care of his funeral; but "when she came," says her nephew, "to bury his body in the Tower, she had forgotten to bring a sheet, and there was not a penny of money left among them all; for she had distributed all she had to the poor for her father's soul. Wherefore Mrs. Harris, her maid, went to the next draper's shop, and agreeing upon the price, made as though she would look for some money in her purse, and then try whether they would trust her or not; and she found in her purse the same sum for which they agreed upon, not one penny over or under, though she knew before certainly that she had not a cross about her." In what way the head was obtained we are not told, further than that Margaret contrived to purchase it, for which she was summoned before the council; but answered with such courage and spirit to their questions, that after a short imprisonment, they were fain to let her go without further molestation. Cresacre says that the gray hairs of the venerable martyr assumed after death a yellow or golden hue, as was witnessed by many who saw the relic. His faithful daughter left orders that after her own death it should be buried with her in her own tomb. She lies in the family vault of the Ropers in St. Dunstan's Church, Canterbury; and there, in Wood's time, the leaden box containing her father's head was to be seen resting on her coffin. In 1835 the vault was examined, and a small niche, closed with an iron grating, was found in the wall above, into which the box had been removed; and there, in all probability, it still remains.

Nor was this all: Margaret was not content till she



had laid by her father's side the relics of his fellow-martyr, the glorious Bishop of Rochester. They had been cast, as has been said, with circumstances of peculiar indignity, into a grave in All Hallows Churchyard; but she is said to have procured them, and placed them beside her father's body in St. Peter's Chapel. There they yet lie, awaiting together a glorious resurrection; and as their lives were lovely, so in death they are not divided.

When the news of More's execution was brought to the king, the messenger found him playing at tables with the unhappy Anne. He rose hastily; and casting on her a furious look, exclaimed, "*Thou* hast been the cause of this man's death!" Doubtless at that moment his seared conscience was wrung with a pang of anguish. But his remorse was not of long duration; he lost no time in expelling the family of his victim from their house, and seizing all their effects; and the grim features of his murdered friend seem to have caused him but little uneasiness as he encountered their deadly aspect in his daily passage from Whitehall to Greenwich.

The horror with which Europe received the intelligence of More's death affixed a stain of infamy on the English name. Henry's ambassador at the imperial court affected ignorance of what had happened. "Well," said Charles, "it is nevertheless true; and this I will say, that rather than lose such a servant, I would have sacrificed the best city in my dominions."

Cardinal Pole writes of him: "I cannot stay myself from weeping as I write, though I am far from my country. I loved him dearly, and yet I had not so many reasons to love him as many had; yet God is my witness, I shed for him, whether I will or no, so many tears, that they hinder me from writing, and often quite blot out my letters, so that I can proceed no further. O England," he continues, "thou hast lost thy father, thine ornament, thy defence! for he left his very life for thy sake, lest he should betray thy salvation." Not less tender is the lament of Erasmus. "All men bewail the death of More," he says, "even those who were adversaries to his religion, so great was his courtesy and affability, and so excellent his nature. Many

are favourable to their own countrymen only,—Frenchmen to Frenchmen, Scotchmen to Scots; but More's bounty to all has so engraven him in the hearts of men, that all lament his death, as though he were their father or their brother. I have seen tears in eyes that never looked on him; yea, whilst I write these lines, the tears gush from my own whether I will or no. Ah, how many a heart has been wounded by that axe!" Jovius, Bishop of Nuceria, applies to him the epithet of "*saintly*;" and there were not wanting those who heartily united in according him such a title.

Stapleton says, that many who afterwards suffered death for the cause of the supremacy avowed publicly that they had gained their courage from the contemplation of his example, among whom was his own parish-priest Leercke, whose mind was so impressed by his glorious death, that he himself shortly underwent the same martyrdom for the same cause.

"For myself," adds Cresacre, "I daily crave his prayers and intercessions for me and for my little ones, who are also a part of his charge, inasmuch as he gave them his blessing in his parting letter, when he wrote, 'God bless Thomas and Augustine, and all that they shall have, even to a thousand generations.'"

The family of More suffered considerably from the royal vengeance. His son was committed to the Tower, having manfully refused to take the oath, and was condemned to death; but nothing being to be gained by the execution of the sentence, he was released after long imprisonment. In spite of a conveyance by which Sir Thomas had settled all his lands and property on his son, long before his disgrace, an act of parliament was passed by which, contrary to all law, every thing was forfeited to the crown. His wife was granted a pension of twenty pounds a year out of the property, but was stripped of all her goods, and turned out of her house at Chelsea, which fell into the hands of the infamous Sir William Paulet; and the heroic Margaret Roper was, as we have seen, called before the council, and imprisoned on the charge

of keeping her father's head as a relic, and *proposing* to publish his works.

We have already detained our readers too long; but the character of More is one on which the mind involuntarily lingers. Even without the crown of martyrdom, which raises his excellence to the heroic standard, More would have been regarded as among the best and greatest of Englishmen. But by his death he has become something more in our eyes than a merely great and good man. More and Fisher must be looked on as the first who, in the 16th century, raised their voices in opposition to the deadly principles of Erastianism. They in their day fought the same good fight which four centuries before had St. Thomas of Canterbury for its undaunted champion. Their blood, like his, flowed at the bidding of a royal tyrant, whose foot was on the liberties of the Church; and it did not flow in vain. The principle for which they died was, after their martyrdom, reasserted with a clearness and precision which had long been lost in England. The glorious army of martyrs who followed them were, one and all, *martyrs for the supremacy of the Holy See*; and the cold uncatholic tone which had crept into the English Church under the usurpations of successive dynasties was so utterly banished, that the little flock who kept the faith, and struggled manfully through three hundred years of cruel persecution, may be said to have rivalled their Saxon forefathers in their devoted loyalty to the Chair of St. Peter. They washed out with their blood the reproach which had fallen on their country; and if in our own day we behold the Church rising, as it were, from her ashes more free and unshackled than in any other Christian land, we may surely in some degree attribute so marvellous a mercy to the merits of her martyrs. Dear and venerable, therefore, as their names should be in our ears, let us never forget the lesson taught us by their story. History is not merely a series of brilliant pictures, or tales of pathetic interest; it is a revelation of solemn truths, written in the lives of those who have gone before us. And the ecclesiastical history of this country has one speciality about it,

namely, that for eight hundred years it has sounded but one note, and uttered but one warning; our saints have struggled, and our martyrs have died, to uphold one vital principle—the divine supremacy of the see of St. Peter, and the Church's unshackled freedom from the bondage of the state. This principle was set forth in the very first line of our great national charter; the whole question between heresy and the Catholic Church, as existing in this land, may be reduced to its assertion or its denial.

While some, therefore, may be found to regret that so many of the most honoured names in our English martyrology are those of men who, in the eyes of the world, died only for a political offence, we cannot but see a deep significance in the fact, and would thankfully accept the lesson. To a man they fell for denying and resisting the dogma of *state supremacy*; to us, their heirs and unworthy children, they have left *their cause as our inheritance*.

“These are they who sometime were had in derision, and for a parable of reproach; and men esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. But behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.”

THE END.





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